8 held for stone pelting in Bagalkot

CM condemns violence, warns of strict action

P8

DH on Saturday

DECCAN HERALD

The Power of Good

Trump vows 10% global tariff after US SC jolt

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Youth Cong workers protest shirtless at AI summit

Party targets 'compromised' PM over US trade deal

SHEMIN JOY
NEW DELHI, DHNS

Indian Youth Congress workers stage a protest during the India AI Impact Summit in New Delhi. PTI

'RAHUL'S SOLDIERS'

- Youth Congress activists disrupt AI summit at Bharat Mandapam
- Call themselves 'Rahul's soldiers'; four held
- BJP terms protest 'anti-national'
- Congress says protests must be held where people gather, not in basement

A group of Youth Congress activists on Friday staged a surprise protest at the 'India AI Impact Summit' against Prime Minister Narendra Modi, calling him "compromised" in reference to the India-US trade deal, which they claimed was detrimental to the country's interests.

Four activists — national secretaries Krishna Hari and Kundan Yadav from Bihar, national coordinator Narasimha Yadav from Telangana and Eastern UP vice president Ajay Kumar — were arrested. Youth Congress president Uday Bhanu Chib was also questioned by the police.

Around a dozen Youth Congress activists gained entry to Bharat Mandapam by registering online and staged a protest at 12.30 pm, which BJP vice president Baijayant Panda described as "anti-national".

Chib defended the protest by "Rahul Gandhi's soldiers", saying they could not remain silent when the prime minister was "compromised".

Additional Commissioner of Police Devesh Kumar Mahla said the protesters registered online and entered after scanning a QR code. "They were wearing sweaters over T-shirts. Near Hall 5, they removed their sweaters and jackets and protested, waving their T-shirts," he said.

As the BJP alleged that the protest tarnished the country's image and was carried out at Rahul's behest, Congress Media and Publicity Department chairman Pawan Khera defended the Youth Congress, saying protests cannot be confined to a "basement" but must be held where people gather.

Taking those present at the venue by surprise, Youth Congress activists removed their jackets and waved T-shirts while shouting slogans.

Some attendees tried to snatch the T-shirts, before security personnel escorted the protesters out.

Police took some of them into custody.

Panda posted on 'X', "Congress has repeatedly proved that in its obsession with targeting PM Modi, they have no compunction in demeaning India itself. Today, it threw away all semblance of decorum at a cutting-edge global event in India. This is not Opposition, it is irresponsibly anti-national. Bharat deserves a proper Opposition, not a bunch of dements led by a buffoon."

Chib said the protest made it clear that the youth of the country will no longer remain silent, as "the PM is compromised" is not just a slogan but reflects the anger of millions of unemployed youth.

"This trade deal with the US is a betrayal of the interests of our farmers and the public, which will only benefit the US. Peaceful protest is our right in a democracy," he said, adding that they were not against the AI summit.

Asked about police action, he said Youth Congress workers are Rahul Gandhi's "soldiers" and would not be intimidated.

US, China have Modi in grips and chokes: Rahul

Accuses PM of being trapped between global pressures

NEW DELHI, DHNS

Stepping up the attack on Prime Minister Narendra Modi over the India-US trade deal, Leader of the Opposition in the Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi on Friday claimed that farmers and the textile industry, among others, were going to suffer because of the "grips and chokes" on the US had put on him.

Explaining why he used the analogy of "grips and chokes", as in the martial art "Jujutsu" in a video posted on X, he said it expressed "very powerfully" what the PM is "going through" with the US on one side and China on the other.

He said that there were grips and chokes in politics as well that were "mostly hidden", and the average person could not see them.

On one side, he said in the video, there was the case against industrialist Gautam Adani in the US as well as the Epstein's scandal in which nearly 30 lakh files were yet to be released.

He claimed that the names of Modi, Union minister Hardeep Puri, and industrialist Anil Ambani were in them, and that the PM was "most likely involved".

He said that there was China on the other side, referring to the unpublished memoirs of retired Army Chief Gen M M Naravane, which he mentioned both inside and outside Parliament.

"So, there are the Chinese on one side, who are sitting on our border, and on the other side, there is the US. And our PM is torn between these grips. He's trapped. Everybody knows it. Everybody can see it," he said.

"The problem is that the real grip on Modi is the fake image that he has built... The key to that image is now in the hands of the US, and that's why Indian farmers are going to suffer, Indian textile is going to suffer," he said.

"The fact that Modi is handing over our data to US companies to the US for a pittance. Mark my words, we are going to become a data colony," he claimed.

Cong to hold 3 protests

The Congress will hold at least three farmers' conferences over the next month — the first in Bhopal on February 24 — to protest against the India-US trade deal, which the party said was against farmers' interests.

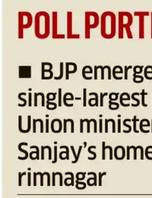
The decision came at a meeting chaired by Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge and attended by Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi, General Secretary (Organisation) KC Venugopal, Himachal Pradesh Chief Minister Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu and state presidents and legislature party leaders of Jammu and Kashmir, Himachal, Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and Maharashtra.

The party decided to hold farmers' conferences first in Madhya Pradesh capital Bhopal on Tuesday, followed by one in Maharashtra's Yavatmal on March 7. Both Kharge and Rahul will attend these programmes. A third meeting will be held in Rajasthan's Sri Ganganagar next month.

Hats off to US court for striking down tariff strategy: Cong

NEW DELHI, PTI: The Congress on Friday hailed the US Supreme Court decision striking down President Donald Trump's global tariffs and said the American system of checks and balances still seems to be working.

In a post on X, Congress general secretary in-charge communications, Jairam Ramesh, said, "Hats off to the US Supreme Court for striking down President Trump's entire tariff strategy! Quite an amazing decision given its ideological composition.


Jairam Ramesh

"A 6-3 verdict is decisive. The American system of checks and balances still seems to be working," he said.

Senior Congress leader P Chidambaram demanded that the government must explain the impact of the judgment on the "deal" that was announced on February 6 between the US and India.

Chidambaram said he had stated that if the court struck down Trump's imposition of tariffs, the result would be that the US and India would revert to the status quo ante of before April 2, 2025.

Defamation case: Rahul appears in UP court

LUCKNOW, DHNS: Leader of the Opposition in the Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi on Friday appeared before an MP/MLA court in Uttar Pradesh's Sultanpur in connection with a criminal defamation case pertaining to his alleged remarks on Union Home Minister Amit Shah during campaigning ahead of the 2018 Karnataka Assembly polls.

Rahul Gandhi

Rahul recorded his statement in the case before the judge, who fixed March 9 next as the next date of hearing in the matter.

BJP leader Vijay Mishra had filed the case against Rahul, contending that the latter had delivered an objectionable and defamatory speech against Shah.

The court, during the hearing of the matter, had given the Congress leader the last opportunity to personally appear before it on Friday.

Rahul's lawyer said the allegations against him were false and "politically motivated".

Rahul, a Lok Sabha member from the neighbouring Rae Bareli seat, later on Friday met Ramchet, a cobbler whose father had died of cancer a few months ago.

SC flags poll-time pleas targeting state govts

Disposes of plea on Kerala flexboards, asks petitioner to move high court

ASHISH TRIPATHI
NEW DELHI, DHNS

'TO EMBARRASS'

- SC says petitions used to 'embarrass' states ahead of elections
- Says litigants risk dragging the apex court into political fray
- SC asks, "How many states will we keep on restraining?"

The Supreme Court on Friday expressed concern over the growing tendency of filing petitions to use the court as a platform to "embarrass" state governments ahead of Assembly elections.

A bench comprising Chief Justice of India Surya Kant and Justices Joymalya Bagchi and Vipul Pancholi observed that petitions brought by private parties often appeared calculated to corner state governments.

The bench cautioned that such litigants risk dragging the apex court into the political fray.

The court was hearing a plea filed by the Human Rights Foundation on the installation of PVC flexboards in Kerala, where elections would be held later this year.

The SC noted that the petitioner's counsel, against the backdrop of the upcoming elections, was seeking a direction from the court to restrain the state from this or that.

"How many states will we keep on restraining? The problem is one — people start fighting political battles in this court, whether it is Kerala, or state A or B. All prayers are to embarrass the state government. That will create some difficult situations for them. We issue a direction, and it becomes difficult for them," it said.

The petitioner's counsel submitted that some states have completely banned PVC flexboards and that Mumbai also has a law prohibiting them.

Questioning the timing of the petition, the SC told the counsel, "The Kerala elections are coming. You are seeking to restrain the state government."

"You people want to create some impediment for whatever election campaign... The high court has issued directions, and if those directions are not complied with, the HC will take care of that. You should continue to fight your issue before the HC," the bench told the counsel.

The SC granted liberty to the petitioner to approach the HC and disposed of the petition.

Congress did nothing for Assam's development, claims Shah

SUMIR KARMAKAR
GUWAHATI, DHNS

Union minister Amit Shah is felicitated by Assam CM Himanta Biswa Sarma in Cachar district of Assam on Friday. PTI

Alleging that the Congress did nothing for Assam's development, Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Friday said what the main Opposition party at the Centre could not do in 50 years, the BJP did in the past 10 years for the state.

"Infiltration and flooding are the two biggest problems in Assam. Infiltrators snatched the rights of the Assamese people, but the Congress kept the borders open to allow infiltration. But since people of Assam elected the BJP 10 years ago, we stopped infiltration in the first five years and the Himanta Biswa Sarma government cleared lakhs of bighas of land from the clutches of the Infiltrators in the past five years," said Shah said at a public meeting at Nathunpur village in Barak Valley in South Assam, organised for the launch of the Central government's Vibrant Village Programme-II.

He said a total of 1,954 villages in 17 states, including 14 in Assam, would be developed under the Rs 6,900-crore project.

Shah said Assam was provided just Rs. 1.28 lakh crore during the Congress-led UPA's tenure at the Centre between 2004 and 2014, while the allocation rose to Rs 15 lakh crore under the Narendra Modi government between 2014 and 2024.

"More than Rs 20,000 crore has been spent on roads, Rs 95,000 crore on railways, and Rs 10,000 crore on the development of airports. We also came up with a lucrative industrial policy while a Rs 27,000 crore semiconductor plant is being set up," the Union minister said.

"Just elect the BJP government for the third term, and we will identify the infiltrators one by one and send them back", he added.

Shah also promised that the BJP government would make Assam free from the annual flooding problem in the next five years.

"The waters of the Brahmaputra, which create havoc every year, will be channelled to the fields of our farmers for irrigation in the next five years. Big canals are being dug across Assam, which will also give a boost to tourism," he said.

Interestingly, Shah had made a similar promise before the Assembly elections in 2021.

Local body polls: BJP slowly breaks out of North Telangana

S N V SUDHIR
HYDERABAD, DHNS

POLL PORTENT

- BJP emerged as the single-largest party in Union minister Bandi Sanjay's home turf, Karimnagar
- It did the same in Nizamabad and Bhainsa
- State BJP chief N Ramchander Rao said BJP also proved its strength in South Telangana's Khammam, Kothagudem, and Narayanpet

The BJP, which has been winning state after state across India, appears to be finally cracking out of northern Telangana if the just-concluded urban local-body polls are anything to go by.

Long confined to North Telangana despite the central leadership's aggressive push, the saffron party showed flickers of broader appeal in the recent elections across the 110-plus municipalities and municipal corporations.

The BJP emerged as the single-largest party in Union minister Bandi Sanjay's home turf, the Karimnagar Municipal Corporation, and Nizamabad MP Dharmapuri Arvind's Nizamabad Municipal Corporation.

The party also clinched the Bhainsa municipality, another North Telangana bastion deeply polarised along religious lines.

Telangana BJP president N Ramchander Rao touted the gains, noting that the BJP was the largest party in over 15 municipalities.

Rao also said the BJP's win proved its new strength in South Telangana areas like Khammam, Kothagudem, and Narayanpet, which were traditionally Congress or BRS territories.

Former senior journalist and political analyst Raka Sudhakar concurred, but told *DH*: "The worry is the 16% vote share is not proportionate with the BJP's performance in the 2024 Lok Sabha polls."

Kuki BJP MLA dies after injuries from violence

GUWAHATI, DHNS: Senior BJP MLA Vungzagin Valte, belonging to the Kuki community in Manipur, passed away on Friday at a private hospital in Gurugram after battling injuries sustained during the ethnic violence in Imphal in May 2023. He was 64.

Valte, who represented the Thanlon Assembly constituency, was airlifted to Delhi on February 8 after his condition deteriorated. Chief Minister Yumnam Khemchand Singh met him at Imphal airport before his transfer for advanced treatment.

Valte had remained bedridden since he was allegedly attacked by Meiteis on May 4, 2023, while returning after meeting then chief minister N Biren Singh in Imphal. He was critically injured, while his driver died on the spot. The incident occurred a day after clashes broke out between the Meitei and Kuki communities.

Confirming Valte's demise, Govindas Konthoujam, a senior minister in the Manipur Cabinet, said, "He was a peace-loving leader who always worked with sincerity and patience to bridge differences between communities. Manipur has lost a dedicated public servant."

Epstein Files: CPM demands Puri's removal from Union Cabinet

NEW DELHI, DHNS: CPM on Friday demanded the removal of Hardeep Puri as Union Minister after his name surfaced in the "extremely repulsive and abhorrent" Epstein Files.

In a statement, the party's Polit Bureau said, "The Union government has disallowed any discussion on the Epstein Files on the floor of the Parliament. In the face of available evidence, Hardeep Singh Puri has been caught lying in his own press conference. Yet, instead of being sacked, he is being protected," it claimed.

In these circumstances, the Polit Bureau "categorically demands" that the PM remove Puri from the government it said.

Notice to Centre on plea to bring son's remains from Dubai

NEW DELHI, DHNS: The Supreme Court on Friday issued notice to the Central government on a woman's plea seeking a direction to bring back the mortal remains of her son, who died in Dubai in December last year.

The court sought a response from the Union government and posted the matter for further hearing to March 16.

Advocate Anand Sanjay M Nuli, appearing for petitioner Savitri, said she was a widow and her son had gone to Dubai to work as a carpenter.

"Now she has been informed that he is dead. He is no more, but his cremation has taken place," the counsel stated. He told the court that the petitioner had received a call in this regard from the embassy.

The court asked if the petitioner knew anybody else in Dubai who could bring back the mortal remains. The petitioner's counsel replied in the negative.

SIR: Kerala list shrinks by 9L

ARJUN RAGHUNATH
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, DHNS

IN NUMBERS

Total voters 2,69,53,644

1,31,26,048 | 1,38,27,319 | 277

Voters in 18-19 age group: 4,24,518

Voters above 85: 2,04,608

Differently-abled: 2,43,698

NRI voters: 2,23,558

Service voters: 54,110

As the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of the electoral rolls in Kerala concludes on Saturday, the total number of voters has come down to over 2.69 crore from 2.78 crore. A total of 8.97 lakh voters were eliminated during the SIR process.

Before the SIR, Kerala had 2,78,50,855 registered voters. In the draft electoral roll published on December 23, following the door-to-door enumeration, the number had dropped to 2,54,42,352 — a reduction of 24,08,503 voters. However, after hearings on claims and objections, the figure rose by 15,11,292, bringing the final tally to 2,69,53,644.

Although the final voters' list is scheduled for formal publication on Saturday, it was shared in advance at a meeting convened by Chief Electoral Officer Rathan U Kelkar with representatives of political parties on Friday. The official release is expected on Saturday.

Kelkar said that those eliminated from the rolls still have the option to file a first appeal and a second appeal. Voters can also be added until the last date for filing nominations for the upcoming Assembly elections. He was responding to concerns raised by Congress and CPM representatives over the drop in voter numbers.

Kelkar said many of those eliminated had not submitted the filled enumeration forms. In the draft list, 53,229 voters were removed due to reasons such as death, foreign citizenship, shifting of residence, and duplicate entries.

As per the rolls prepared by the State Election Commission for the 2025 local body elections, the total number of voters stood at 2.86 crore.

BJP is exerting pressure on Vijay and party: TVK

CHENNAI, DHNS: Tamilaga Vetri Kazhagam (TVK) on Friday alleged that the party has begun to face "pressure" from the BJP on the issues of the release of *Jana Nayagan* and the CBI inquiry into the death of 41 people in a stampede at actor-politician Vijay's rally in Karur. The party reiterated that TVK will never ally with the BJP.

In Madurai, C G Arunraj, general secretary (Propaganda and Policy), said, "It takes great courage to openly declare both the ruling party at the state and the Centre as opponents. In many ways, pressure was exerted by the ruling party at the Union level. But the leader's stand is very clear, and he is clear he won't ally with communal forces."

Yogi's deputy performs 'puja' as BJP faces Brahmin backlash

SANJAY PANDEY
LUCKNOW, DHNS

Brijesh Pathak

In an apparent damage control exercise to pacify the Brahmin community following the alleged mistreatment of Batuk Brahmins (Hindu children undergoing Vedic education in Gurukul) — all disciples of Swami Avimukteshwaranand — by police during the recently concluded Magh Mela in Prayagraj, Uttar Pradesh Deputy Chief Minister Brijesh Pathak performed a 'batuk puja' with 101 batuks.

With Brahmin leaders and outfits slamming the BJP government for "humiliating the community", and Swami Avimukteshwaranand questioning the Hindu credentials of CM Yogi Adityanath, Pathak's puja was seen as an attempt to placate the electorally influential community and blunt rival campaigns portraying the BJP as anti-Brahmin.

Videos that surfaced on social media purportedly showed police dragging the 'batuks' by their 'shikha' (the traditional tuft of hair worn by Brahmins), triggering a massive backlash from community members across the country.

"Dragging the batuks by shikhas is a grave sin," Pathak said in the Assembly after being cornered by the Opposition on the issue. Samajwadi Party leader Shivpal Singh Yadav said that Pathak, who is a Brahmin, should resign if he truly felt offended.

File criminal case against DMK minister: HC

CHENNAI, DHNS: The Madras High Court on Friday directed the Directorate of Vigilance and Anti-Corruption (DVAC) to register a criminal case against Municipal Administration Minister K N Nehru based on inputs alleging a cash-for-jobs scam by the Enforcement Directorate (ED).

The First Division Bench of Chief Justice Manindra Mohan Shirvastava and Justice G Arul Murugan concluded that the voluminous materials shared by the ED in a detailed dossier to the Tamil Nadu police in October 2025 was sufficient to register a case, while hearing a petition demanding registration of an FIR by AIADMK Rajya Sabha MP I S Inbadurai.

Bengaluru Saturday, February 21, 2026 Pages 32 Vol 79 No 52 ₹8

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WHACKY VERSE

China maul

This university's 'AI invention'
Caused serious hypertension.
They were clearly guilty
Of doing a copycat palti—
Claiming credit for pretension.

DH on Saturday

DECCAN HERALD
The Power of Good

Kiwis brace for Pakistan spin test

T20WC Super 8 Group 2 opening match today

P19

School without homework, exams

Parents dream of giving their child a solid education. Quite often, this means a system that prepares children for high scores and well-paying careers. But a small number of parents are sending their children to schools with no fixed syllabus, no exams, and little competition.

The SATURDAY STORY

Full story, Page 17

Trump vows 10% global tariff after US SC jolt

Court says Congress has power to impose taxes; US Prez says verdict influenced by foreign interests

WASHINGTON, AFP

President Donald Trump vowed Friday to impose a 10% tariff on all imports into the United States after the Supreme Court handed him a stinging rebuke by striking down his signature economic policy.

The conservative-majority top court ruled six-three that a 1977 law known as the International Emergency Economic Powers Act (IEEPA) Trump has relied on "does not authorise the president to impose tariffs."

Trump, who had nominated two of the justices who repudiated him, responded furiously, alleging without any evidence that the court was influenced by foreign interests.

"I'm ashamed of certain members of the court, absolutely ashamed, for not having the courage to do what's right for our country," Trump told reporters.

Trump said he would use a separate authority to impose a uniform tariff of 10% — after he spent the past year imposing various rates spontaneously to cajole and punish other countries.

"In order to protect our country, a president can actually charge more tariffs than I was charging in the past," Trump said, insisting that the ruling left him "more powerful".

The ruling did not impact sector-specific duties Trump separately imposed on imports of steel, aluminum and various other goods. Several government probes which could lead to more sectoral tariffs remain in the works.

Still, it marked Trump's biggest defeat at the Supreme Court since returning to the White House last year.

SOME TARIFFS IMPOSED BY TRUMP USING IEEPA

Liberation Day tariffs

- Trump slapped import taxes on nearly every country in the world last April
- Imposed "reciprocal" tariffs of up to 50% on goods from dozens of countries (Delayed by months and revised)
- Baseline 10% tariff on everyone else (came into effect immediately)
- Major countries impacted include South Korea, Japan and the EU

Tariffs on India

- After Liberation Day, Trump slapped a **25%** levy on Indian imports
- Later added another **25%** for purchases of Russian oil
- Trade deal to reduce tariffs to **18%**

Trafficking tariffs

- Imposed on **Mexico (25%), Canada (35%)** and **China (10%)**
- Trump declared a national emergency over undocumented immigration and the trafficking of drugs like fentanyl and the chemicals made to use it

"The president asserts the extraordinary power to unilaterally impose tariffs of unlimited amount, duration, and scope. In light of the breadth, history, and constitutional context of that asserted authority, he must identify clear congressional authorisation to exercise it.

Chief Justice John Roberts, US Supreme Court

The court noted Friday that "had Congress intended to convey the distinct and extraordinary power to impose tariffs" with IEEPA, "it would have done so expressly, as it consistently has in other tariff statutes".

The court's three liberal justices joined three conservatives in Friday's ruling, which upheld lower court decisions that tariffs Trump imposed were illegal.

Trump heaped praise on Brett Kavanaugh, the only justice he nominated who voted with him. Kavanaugh, who referred to the tariffs on India, was joined in his dissent by conservatives Clarence Thomas and Samuel Alito.

India deal remains valid, says US Prez

Trump suggested that most trade deals negotiated under the threat of his tariffs remained valid, mentioning specifically India, despite the Supreme Court ruling those levies illegal. "The India deal is on," Trump told reporters in response to a question, while suggesting tariffs under separate authorities would replace the ones overturned by the Supreme Court.

Chief Secretary-led committee to review tunnel bids, says DKS

DyCM defends project, cites high land acquisition cost

BENGALURU, DHNS

The Karnataka government has constituted a high-level committee headed by Chief Secretary Shalini Rajneesh to review bids received for the proposed tunnel road project in Bengaluru, amid criticism and a political pushback.

Speaking about the project at the DH Bengaluru 2040 Summit, Deputy Chief Minister D K Shivakumar said 20 firms had shown interest in the bidding process, but stressed that "small companies cannot execute a project of this scale". He also clarified that the government cannot increase the viable gap funding under the BOOT (Build-Own-Operate-Transfer) model.

His response comes to a question on the Adani Group securing the lowest bids in both packages of the 17-km tunnel road project covering Hebbal and Central Silk Board.

The tunnel road forms part of a broader Rs 1.5 lakh crore infrastructure push that includes elevated corridors, double-decker road-cum-metro flyovers and flyovers aimed at easing congestion in the city.

"Time is money. Reaching office itself has become a problem," he said, defending the project against critics. "Mumbai has seven tunnels. Delhi has sought our project report. Those opposing it lack administrative experience."

He pointed out that land acquisition in core areas such as Sadashivnagar, where land prices touch Rs 50,000 per sq ft, makes conventional road widening nearly impossible. "We neither have the resources nor the feasibility to demolish such properties. That is why tunnel roads and double-decker corridors have been conceptualised," he said.

▸ DKS, Page 9
Full coverage on Pages 4,5,6,7

Deputy Chief Minister D K Shivakumar at the DH Bengaluru 2040 Summit in Bengaluru on Friday. DH PHOTOS/B K JANARDHAN

PURAVANKARA
PRESENTS
DH BENGALURU 2040 SUMMIT
SPECIAL PARTNERS
GREATER BENGALURU AUTHORITY and 5 BENGALURU CITY CORPORATIONS

Make playing easy in B'luru again: Dravid

Cricket great Rahul Dravid on Saturday called for Bengaluru's growth story to include easier access for children to play, saying time and space for sport must not become casualties of traffic and infrastructure pressure. In his keynote address at the DH Bengaluru 2040 Summit, Dravid rooted his speech in personal memory before turning to the city's future.

Details on Page 4

SC orders deployment of judges to finish Bengal SIR

ASHISH TRIPATHI
NEW DELHI, DHNS

In an "extraordinary" move, the Supreme Court on Friday directed for deployment of serving and retired judicial officers for a smooth conclusion of the special revision of electoral rolls in West Bengal, where the Election Commission and the Trinamool government are engaged in a feud over the exercise.

Taking note of the "trust deficit" between the two Constitutional bodies in the state, a bench of CJI Surya Kant and Justices Joymalya Bagchi and Vipul M Pancholi asked the Calcutta HC Chief Justice to spare some judicial officers and find former judges in the rank of District Judge to assist in SIR process.

"There is an unfortunate blame game of allegations and counter-allegations which shows trust deficit between the two Constitutional functionaries — the state government and the EC," the bench said.

▸ SIR, Page 9

India joins US-led AI alliance Pax Silica

GYANENDRA KESHRI
NEW DELHI, DHNS

India on Friday signed a declaration to join a US-led alliance Pax Silica that seeks to build a resilient supply chain for critical minerals and artificial intelligence.

IT Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw

Union Minister for Electronics and Information Technology Ashwini Vaishnaw said the cooperation under Pax Silica would further deepen engagement on critical technologies and supply chain resilience under the India-US Comprehensive Global Strategic Partnership. "This will greatly benefit India's electronics and semiconductor industry," he said.

Secretary, Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology, S Krishnan and US Ambassador to India Sergio Gor and US Under Secretary of State for Economic Growth, Energy and the Environment Jacob Helberg signed the agreement at an event held on the margins of the AI Impact Summit.

The Pax Silica alliance was launched in December 2025 at a summit in Washington, with partner nations including Australia, Greece, Israel, Japan, Qatar, the Republic of Korea, Singapore, the United Arab Emirates and the United Kingdom.

The stated objective of the initiative is to reduce dependencies in the technology supply chain and shape how the AI economy is built. The alliance is seen as a counter to China's dominance in rare earths.

▸ Pax Silica, Page 9

India-US trade deal to kick off in April: Goyal

An interim trade agreement between India and the United States is likely to be signed next month and would be operationalised by April, Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal said on Friday.

Details on Page 15

WOWED BY BENGALURU

'Big traffic problem, smart solutions': Dutch PM

Dick Schoof, PM of the Netherlands, in Bengaluru on Friday. DH PHOTO

BENGALURU, DHNS

Netherlands Prime Minister Dick Schoof believes Bengaluru has a "big traffic problem" but is impressed by how the city is harnessing AI-driven tools to tackle it.

Dr Schoof arrived in the city on Thursday night after attending the AI Impact Summit in New Delhi.

On Friday, he toured the Innovation Campus-Software Excellence Centre of Dutch multinational Philips, the Indian Institute of Science (IISc), and the Traffic and Transit Management Centre (TTMC).

He later briefed reporters on his whirlwind visit to Bengaluru, a city that amazed him with its greenery, AI talent pool, air quality and innovative traffic management.

Dr Schoof was fascinated by how the TTMC was using software tools to regulate traffic — an "almost impossible job".

"The way they combine all kinds of data, they can not only see what's actually happening, but can also predict how the traffic will probably develop. They can also put in the weather... they can really see what's happening, and they can react very quickly, not only in the proactive way, but also very quickly react when something is happening, for example, an accident, and they can send also traffic police to the right spot, and do the right thing in organising the traffic," he stated.

▸ Dutch PM, Page 9

SIKSHA 'O' ANUSANDHAN (DEEMED TO BE UNIVERSITY)

SIKSHA 'O' ANUSANDHAN
SAAT-2026

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PROGRAMMES OFFERED

B.TECH PROGRAMMES IN CORE ENGINEERING
Civil Engineering
Electrical Engineering
Mechanical Engineering

B.TECH PROGRAMMES IN ELECTRONICS DESIGN
Electrical and Electronics Engineering
Electronics and Communication Engineering

B.TECH PROGRAMMES IN CORE COMPUTING
Computer Science and Engineering
Computer Science and Information Technology

B.TECH PROGRAMMES IN EMERGING COMPUTING
Computer Science and Engineering (AI and ML)
Computer Science and Engineering (Cyber Security)
Computer Science and Engineering (Data Science)
Computer Science and Engineering (Internet of Things)

M.TECH PROGRAMMES
Structural Engineering
Electric Vehicle Technology
Machine Design and Robotics
Embedded System and VLSI Design
Computer Science and Engineering

M.Sc. PROGRAMMES
Physics
Chemistry
Mathemetics
Biotechnology
Integrated M.Sc. Biotechnology

COMPUTER APPLICATIONS PROGRAMMES
Bachelor of Computer Applications (BCA)
Master of Computer Applications (MCA)

LAW PROGRAMMES
BA. LL.B (H) - Integrated
BBA LL.B (H) - Integrated
LL.B. (H) - 3 Years
LL.M. - 1 Year

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MBA
Integrated MBA
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MBA (Artificial Intelligence and Data Science)

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MBA (Hospitality Management)

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B.Sc. (Nursing) (Post Basic)
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M.Sc. Agriculture

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21, 22 & 23 February, 2026

Tripura Vasini, Palace Grounds - Bengaluru.

Inauguration by

Shri H D Kumaraswamy
Honourable Union Minister for Heavy Industries and Steel Government of India

21st February 2026
10.30 AM

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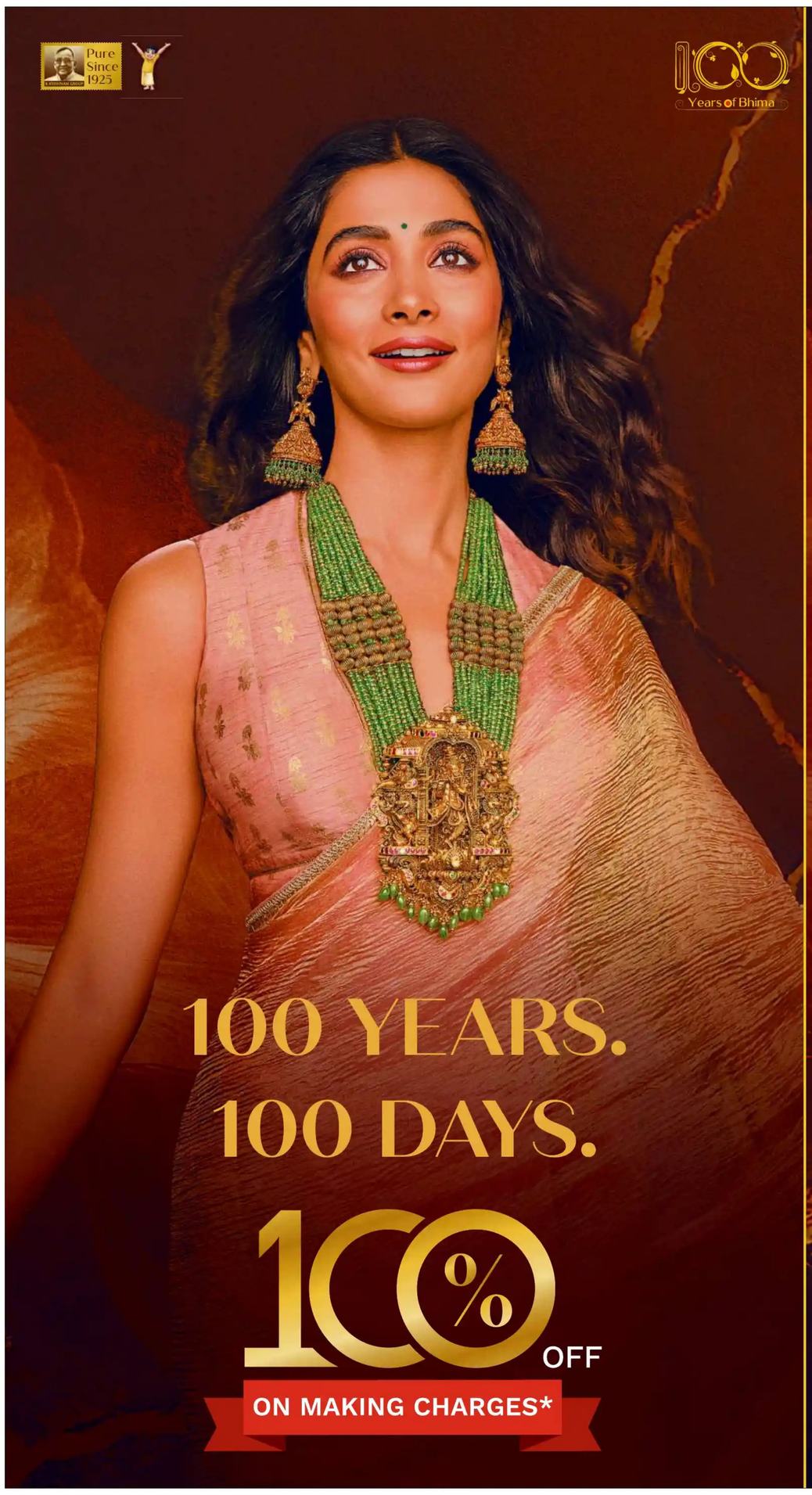

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Shri Siddaramaiah
Hon'ble Chief Minister of Karnataka

Department of Health & Family Welfare

TOWARDS COMPREHENSIVE HUMAN RESOURCE STRENGTHENING

Appointment Order Distribution Ceremony

Shri D. K. Shivakumar
Hon'ble Dy. Chief Minister of Karnataka

— Inauguration —

Shri Siddaramaiah
Hon'ble Chief Minister,
Government of Karnataka

Chief Guest
Shri D.K. Shivakumar
Hon'ble Dy. Chief Minister,
Government of Karnataka

Chief Guest
Shri Dinesh Gundu Rao
Hon'ble Minister for Health & Family Welfare,
Government of Karnataka

Presiding
Shri Rizwan Arshad
Hon'ble MLA, Shivajinagar Assembly Constituency

Venue
Bharat Ratna Dr. B. R. Ambedkar Bhavan, Vasanth Nagar, Bengaluru.

Date 21.02.2026 | **Time** 11.00 AM

1000+ Permanent Job Recruitement

- Priority appointments for 320 candidates from the Kalyana Karnataka region.
- Permanent recruitment to 650 paramedical posts across the state.
- Appointment of 77 new Drug Inspectors.

Recruitment Under Process

Post	Number of Vacancies
Primary Health Care Officers	1,205
Kalyana Karnataka Paramedical Posts	877
Staff Nurses	600
Health Inspectors	300
Pharmacy & Laboratory Technical Officers	800
MBBS & Specialist Doctors	220

Administrative Milestones

Transfer of **5,700+ staff** through transparent online counselling, a first in the Dept's history.

A first-of-its-kind initiative: Out of the approved **1000** Apprenticeship programme, **226 D.Pharma** candidates have been selected for training in first phase.

Obstetricians, Anaesthetists & Paediatricians have been redeployed from less work load Community Health Centres to ensure **24 hours services** in all Taluk Hospitals & selected high load CHC's.

Transparent selection & posting of **1,400** newly graduated doctors to vacant MBBS positions statewide under one-year compulsory medical service with preference to Govt quota candidates.

Reasonable restriction to curb **private practice** of Govt Doctors to ensure priority for Govt Health Services.

Implementation of Face Recognition based attendance [KAMS] for the first time & **33000+** regular employees are already registered in the state.

Establishment of a **Directorate of Recruitment** & phase wise creation of a **Public Health Management Cadre** in pipeline.

Posting of **administrative staff** through transparent and objective criteria is planned.

Strong Karnataka, Strong Lives

Honourable Chief Minister **Shri Siddaramaiah** & Health Minister **Shri Dinesh Gundu Rao** participated in the department's programme

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Jayanagar:	Hema Chandra Kalyan Mahal, 2nd Block, (Near Ashoka Pillar) - 11
Banshankari:	Sri Hari Kalyana Mantap, 30th Main, B.S.K. 3rd Stage, Near K.I.M.S. Hospital - 560085
Rajarajeshwari Nagar:	Vasavi Mahal Kalyana Mantapa (Basement), Next to Reliance Digital, Ideal Homes I Phase - 560098
Vijay Nagar:	Five O Gallery, 17th Cross, M.C. Road, Near Vijay Nagar Bus Stop - 560040
Rajajinagar:	Raja Rajeshwari Kalyana Mantapa, (1st Floor), 2nd Block, Next To Blue Hyunday Showroom, Dr. Rajkumar Road - 560010
Koramangala:	Apoorva International, #35A, Raheja Arcade, Opp Star Box - 560095
Basavanagudi:	Amolak Apparels, 7/3, 1st Floor, Opp. Karnataka Bank - 560004

Org. by: Surya Agency Pvt. Ltd.

Action initiated to auction 40 properties for unpaid taxes

If dues are cleared, properties will be off auction list

BENGALURU, DHNS

Commissioner Rajendra Cholan has announced that auction proceedings will be conducted on Saturday for 40 properties located in Zone-1 and Zone-2 within the limits of the Bengaluru Central City Corporation.

These properties have pending property tax dues amounting to Rs 1.16 crore.

Property tax collected within the Bengaluru Central City Corporation limits is utilised for the development and maintenance of essential civic infrastructure and public services.

Under the Greater Bengaluru Administration Act, 2025, all properties within the corporation limits are required to pay property tax every financial year. In cases of non-payment, recovery procedures are carried out in accordance with the Property Tax Assessment, Collection and Management Rules, 2024.

As per the provisions of the Act and the Rules, show-cause notices and demand notices were issued to the property tax defaulters, and sufficient time was provided for payment. In addition, periodic mobile messages were sent to property owners reminding them

Rajendra Cholan

to clear their outstanding dues.

Despite multiple opportunities being provided, it has now been decided to initiate distress sale proceedings, as per the Act and Rules, against identified defaulters within the CV Raman Nagar (Zone-1) and Gandhinagar (Zone-2) limits of the Bengaluru Central City Corporation. The identified properties include 17 residential properties, 16 non-residential properties, and seven mixed-use properties, bringing the total to 40 properties.

The auction will be conducted under the chairmanship of the Joint Commissioners of CV Raman Nagar (Zone-1) and Gandhinagar (Zone-2), to recover the pending property tax dues from the identified defaulter properties. The auction proceedings will be held at the Conference Hall of the Commissioner's Office, PU Building, MG Road, Bengaluru–560001.

Details of the identified properties have been displayed on the notice boards at the Office of the Joint Commissioner, CV Raman Nagar (Zone-1), Mayo Hall Building, Residency Road, Bengaluru–560001, and at the Office of the Joint Commissioner, Gandhinagar (Zone-2), GBA Head Office Campus, Annex Building-3, 5th Floor, NR Square, Bengaluru.

Indian women attain menopause earlier than those in the UK, says expert

BENGALURU, DHNS: Women in the United Kingdom experience menopause between 50 and 55 years, while Indian women on average reach menopausal stage at 46, said Dr Sudeshna Ray, Royal Society of Gynaecs, London.

"The menstrual decline begins five to seven years before actual menopause," Dr Sudeshna told an informal gathering of over 40 women, organised by Shethepeople, an online platform focusing on women's issues.

"So, for Indian women the decline starts in the late 30s or early 40s," she added.

She also said that women in the UK are not routinely prescribed iron supplements during pregnancy because their diet provides sufficient iron, whereas Indian women are placed on iron supplements as soon as they conceive.

On understanding menopause, she said it is important to have family members present during the consultation with a gynaecologist. The support and understanding of the family are crucial, she said.

To a question, she said menopause has a direct impact on mental health.

Busting the myth about menopause on women's libido, Dr Sudeshna said: "Both have absolutely no correlation. Menopause leads to vaginal dryness but libido, no. In fact, several women are more at peace during menopause as there is no fear of pregnancy."

Dutch PM visits traffic command centre, lauds AI-driven tech

ASTraM system showcased during visit to BTP headquarters

BENGALURU, DHNS

Dutch Prime Minister Dick Schoof visited the Bengaluru Traffic Police's (BTP) Traffic Management Centre on Friday and reviewed its AI-based traffic systems.

School is in the city for the AI Impact Summit 2026. He was briefed on the city's technology-driven approach to tackling congestion.

Accompanied by a high-level delegation, School witnessed the operations of Actionable Intelligence for Sustainable Transformation Management (ASTraM), an AI system developed in collaboration with Dutch firm Arcadis.

Prime Minister of the Netherlands Dick Schoof at the BTP's Traffic Management Centre on Friday. DG&IGP MA Saleem, Bengaluru City Police Commissioner Seemant Kumar Singh, and JCP Karthik Reddy hosted the delegation.

BTP top brass, including Director General and Inspector General of Police MA Saleem, Bengaluru City Police Commissioner Seemant Kumar Singh and JCP Traffic Karthik Reddy, hosted the delegation.

"The Prime Minister was keen to understand how Dutch-engineered intelligence is being adapted to manage the hectic task of Bengaluru's traffic," a senior officer noted.

The visit included live demonstrations of AI-enabled surveillance showing the ability to monitor traffic violations and flow in real-time. He also saw the adaptive signal control, systems that adjust signal timings based on vehicle density.

School was also shown congestion mapping involving technology that provides field officers with updates every 15 minutes to intervene at non-recurring bottlenecks, such as those caused by accidents or fallen trees.

Invites to be published should be sent to: **incitytoday@deccanherald.co.in.** Please note that hard copies will not be accepted

Government of India, Ministry of Defence
Defence Research & Development Organization (DRDO)
Centre for Military Airworthiness & Certification (CEMILAC)
Marathahalli Colony, Bengaluru - 560 037

Ref / Advt: CEMILAC/5925/HRD/RF — 27 Jan 2026

Advertisement for the Selection of Junior Research Fellowship (JRF) at CEMILAC. Bengaluru,

Centre for Military Airworthiness & Certification (CEMILAC), is a regulatory body under DRDO, vested with the responsibility of Airworthiness Certification of Military Aircraft, Helicopter, Unmanned Aerial Systems (UAS), Aero-engines, Air launched Weapons and other Airborne Stores. Airworthiness function is implemented through the 18 Regional Centers of Military Airworthiness (RCMAs), located across India and CEMILAC acts as the corporate headquarters.

2. Applications are invited from candidates possessing below mentioned qualification: -

S.N	Type of Fellowships	Number of fellowships	Subject Discipline	Minimum Educational Qualification
1	Junior Research Fellow	01	Aeronautical Engineering	Graduate Degree in professional course (B.E / BTech) in relevant subject / discipline in **first division with GATE** Or Post Graduate Degree in professional course (M.E / MTech) in relevant subject / discipline in **first division both at Graduate & Post Graduate Level.**

3. Upper Age Limit: 28 years as on last date for receipt of application. The upper age limit shall be relaxable to the candidates belonging to SC, ST & OBC (NCL) category as per Government Rules in Vogue.

4. **Emolument:** Stipend of Rs. 37,000/- per month plus HRA & Medical facilities are applicable as per rules.

5. **Tenure:** The initial offer shall be for a period of 02 years, extendable up to a maximum of 04 years as per provisions of scheme of Research Fellows in DRDO.

6. Type written application in the format enclosed (available at **www.drdo.gov.in** —> careers) along with self-attested copies of educational qualifications and experience, should reach **"The Chief Executive (Airworthiness)"**

Centre for Military Airworthiness & Certification (CEMILAC),
DRDO, Ministry of Defence,
Marathahalli Colony Post,
Bengaluru - 560 037

within 21 days from the date of publication of the advertisement in Employment News. The envelope containing application should be super scribed **"Application for JRF"** at the top left corner.

7. Candidates currently employed in Government / Public Sector Undertakings / Autonomous bodies will be required to produce NOC (No Objection Certificate) at the time of Interview.

8. Candidates will be required to produce Certificates / Testimonials in original at the time of Interview.

9. It may please be noted that offer of Fellowship does not confer on fellows any right for absorption in DRDO.

10. The candidates may be allowed to register for Ph.D with any University / Institution during the tenure of the fellowship.

11. Candidates attending the interview will be reimbursed to and fro sleeper class railway fare by the shortest route indicated in the application or the place where the journey is started whichever is less.

Sd/-
Head - HRD
for Chief Executive (Airworthiness)

APPLICATION FOR RESEARCH FELLOWSHIP IN DRDO

1. Name (in Block letters) :_____
2. Father's / Husband's Name :_____
3. (a) Marital Status (Married / Single) :_____(b) Nationality:_____
4. (a) Category (GEN/SC/ST/OBC/PH) :_____(b) Date of Birth:_____
   (c) Age as on date of application : Years_____Months_____Days_____
5. Address for Communication :_____

Paste recent photograph

State:_____Pin Code: _____

Contact details: Landline (with STA code)_____Mobile No.:_____
Email Address:_____

6. Permanent Residential Address:_____

State:_____Pin Code: _____

7. Educational Qualification (from SSC/Matric onwards; Self-attested copies to be enclosed)

Exam passed	Subject(s)	University/Board	Year of passing	Division / Class	% Marks

8. Brief description of the Project Work carried out during Graduation / Post Graduation Level ____

9. Experience:

Name of the organization	Period of Service		Reasons for leaving
	From	To	

10. Whether Qualified in UGC/CSIR/NET/GATE Examinations: YES / NO
If yes, give details (proof to be enclosed)

11. Have you ever been interviewed in any DRDO Unit, please give details : YES / NO
(Note: Candidates already awarded JRF positions in any of the DRDO Units earlier are not eligible to apply again)

12. Any other information:

DECLARATION: I hereby declare that the above particulars furnished are correct and no information is suppressed.

Place:
Date:

(Signature of the candidate)

CBC 10301/11/0173/2526

TURNKEY CONTRACT FOR THE WORK OF SUPPLY, INSTALLATION, COMMISSIONING OF PLANT/EQUIPMENT ETC.

E-Tender No. : Mech-LMG-ET-14-2025-26, **Dated:** 19-02-2026; E-Tender are invited by the undersigned for the following work; **Name of work :** Turnkey contract for the work of Supply, Installation, Commissioning of Plant/Equipment & Related Infrastructure and Operation of Mechanized Laundry at Badarpur, Collection of soiled linen from coaches from Agartala, Silchar, Sairang Railway station and loading of washed linen into coaches at Agartala, Silchar, Sairang Railway station for a period of 10 years under BOOT (Build- Own - Operate- Transfer) Basis and Transportation of linen from BOOT Laundry to nominated Stations including onboard distribution of linen to passenger, blanket repair & stitching of curtains. **Advertised Value:** ₹182,27,87,977.67/-; **Earnest Money**: ₹92,63,900/-; Date & time of **closing** of tender at **13:00** hrs. on **30-03-2026**. For complete information with the tender document of above e-tender will be available in the website **www.ireps.gov.in**

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Electrical Department (TRD Branch)
E-TENDER NOTICE
No. JBP/TRD/TENDER/2025/10
date: 18.02.2026

Senior Divisional Electrical Engineer (TRD) West Central Railway Jabalpur for and on behalf of the President of India invite sealed tenders from the reputed and experienced contractors having valid Electrical License issued in the name of firm by State Government as required under IE rules, 1956 with one of the partners or in his own name if sole proprietor. **Name of work:** Supply, erection, testing and commissioning of Automatic fault locator (AFL) for 2x25 kV AC traction system based on auto transformer natural current for SP, SSP and TSS on KTE-Bina section of JBP division., **Place of work:** Jabalpur Division, **Completion period :** 12 months, **Tender value (Cost of the work) :** Rs. 6,31,52,974.75/- (Rs. Six Crore Thirty One Lakh Fifty Two Thousand Nine Hundred Seventy Four and Seventy Five Paisa only), **Earnest money**: Rs. 4,65,800.00/-, **Date & Time for submission/ opening of tender :** 13.03.2026 15:00 Hrs./13.03.2026 15:30 Hrs., Website address https://www.ireps.gov.in. Tenderers are advised to regularly visit IREPS website"http:// www.ireps.gov.in" to note any changes /corrigendum. Minimum eligibility criteria as per tender form shall be applicable for this tender.

Sd./-
Sr. DEE/TRD
West Central Railway, Jabalpur

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◆ IN THE CITY ◆

GENERAL

National Real Estate Conference: Inauguration by V Somanna; 'Udyama Ratna Award' presentation by Basavaraj Bommai; Awardee: S Shadakshari; Royal Orchid Resort, Yelahanka; 9 am.

Art Exhibition: 'Threads of Thoughts'; Artists Venugopal VG, J Senthil Kumar, Ninganagouda C Patil; Organised at Art House, Palace Road, Vasanthnagar; 10 am to 6 pm.

Inauguration: Jain Heritage Sports School; Venkatesh Prasad, Chenraj Roychand to attend; Jain Heritage School, Hebbal; 10.30 am.

CULTURAL

Play: 'Baybadki'; Directed by Bhishma Ramaiah; Organised by Antarang Bahirang; Nani Angala, Suchitra Film Society, Banashankari; 4 pm & 7 pm.

◆ CITY WEATHER ◆

FORECAST
Mainly Clear sky
TEMPERATURES

Maximum	31.6°C
Minimum	18.0°C
Rainfall (as of 8:30 am)	--
Humidity (as of 5:30 pm)	44%
Sunset (Feb 21)	6:27 pm
Sunrise (Feb 22)	6:40 am
Moonrise	8:28 am
Moonset	9:01 pm

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For More Information Visit: www.ccsniam.gov.in
CBC 01375/11/0006/2526

Metro Railway, Kolkata

CORRIGENDUM

Corrigendum 1 against **Open Tender Notice No. S&T/Works/08-2024-Retender-2. Name of Works:** Replacement of Passenger Announcement System (PAS) and Passenger Information Display System (PIDS) in Blue line of Metro Railway, Kolkata. **New Items Added- Conditions: Sl. No. 1, Description:** OEM/OEM Subsidiaries must have office in India (Confirmation on OEM Letter Head to be submitted). **Sl. No. 2, Description:** OEM/OEM Subsidiaries should have 24x7x365 Technical Support Center in India (Confirmation on OEM Letter Head to be submitted). **Sl. No. 3, Description:** OEM/OEM Subsidiaries should be ISO 9001 & ISO 14001 certified (Necessary OEM declaration and valid ISO certificate must be provided in this regard). **Condition Type:** Technical-Compliance [For Sl. no. 1, 2 & 3]. **Confirmation Required:** Yes [For Sl. no. 1, 2 & 3]. **Remarks Allowed:** Yes . [For Sl. no. 1, 2 & 3]. **Documents Uploaded:** Not Allowed [For Sl. no. 1, 2 & 3]. **Items Deleted - NIT Condition: Sl.No. 1, Description:** OEM must have office in India (Confirmation on OEM Letter Head to be submitted). **Sl.No. 2, Description:** OEM should be ISO 9001 & ISO 14001 certified (Necessary OEM declaration and valid ISO certificate must be provided in this regard). **Sl.No. 3, Description:** OEM should have 24x7x365 Technical Support Center in India (Confirmation on OEM Letter Head to be submitted). **Condition Type:** Technical-Compliance [For Sl. no. 1, 2 & 3]. **Documents: Sl.No.:** 1, **Document Description:** Replies to Pre Bid Queries. **File Name:** RepliestoPrebidofPIDSPASqueries.pdf. **Sl.No.:** 2, **Document Description:** Tender Document. **File Name:** TENDER DOCUMENTPIDSPASFINALUPDATED_1.pdf. **Tender Documents: Sl.No.**1, **File Name:** TENDERDOCUMENTPIDSPASFINAL.pdf. **Document Description:** Tender Document.

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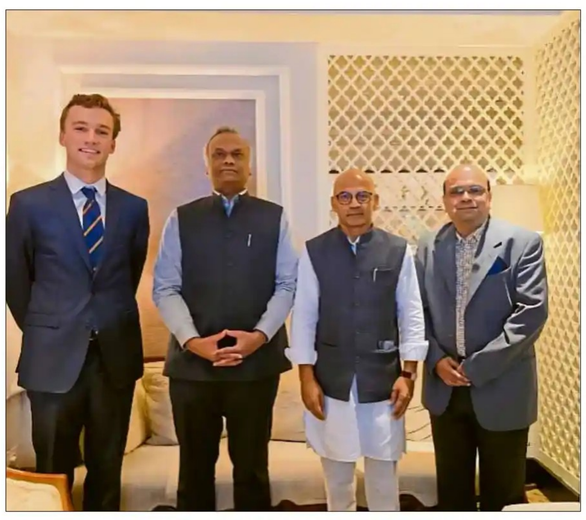

Ministers Dr Sharan Prakash Patil and Priyank M Kharge along with dignitaries at the announcement of the partnership in Bengaluru.

St John's ties up with French firm for agentic AI

BENGALURU, DHNS: St John's Research Institute has partnered with French startup H Company to advance Agentic Artificial Intelligence in healthcare administration.

The collaboration was cited by French President Emmanuel Macron during his inaugural address at the India AI Impact Summit 2026 in New Delhi.

In his address, Macron spoke about the need for responsible, inclusive and sovereign AI.

He referred to the Indo-French collaboration involving St John's Research Institute as an example of how Artificial Intelligence can transform hospital administration and deliver impact in public service environments such as healthcare.

St John's Research Institute, which facilitates research and innovation at St John's, will work with H Company to deploy AI-driven solutions aimed at reducing administrative burden on medical and clinical staff.

By automating repetitive and time-intensive tasks, the initiative seeks to improve operational efficiency and allow healthcare professionals to focus more on patient care.

The collaboration will begin with an operational deployment to understand resource management processes and clinical staff coordination. Once tailored to the St John's Technology Platform, the technology will function in a live hospital environment, performing automated tasks in resource allocation and management.

The partnership has been jointly designed by H Company and the SJRI leadership, including Dr Tony DS Raj, Dean, St John's Research Institute and Head, Division of Medical Informatics; and Dr Dhinagaran D, Assistant Professor, in collaboration with Sara Oomen, Chief of Nursing Services at St John's.

St John's Research Institute acknowledged the support of the Government of Karnataka, including Dr Sharan Prakash Patil, Minister for Skill Development, Entrepreneurship and Livelihood; and Priyank M Kharge, Minister for Electronics, IT and BT, as well as support from the Government of India, including Jitin Prasad, Union Minister of Commerce and Industry; and Abhishek Singh, DG, NIC and Additional Secretary, MeitY, Government of India.

The announcement was facilitated by Indo-French stakeholders and ecosystem leaders, including La French Tech leaders Ms Souad Tenfiche Ancelle and Julie Huguet.

The partnership reflects a shared Indo-French commitment to deploying responsible and impactful AI solutions to strengthen health systems.

Property crimes rise due to surge in vehicle thefts

Close to 16 two-wheelers stolen in a day; police flag vulnerable zones

DH SPECIAL

ASHWIN BM
BENGALURU, DHNS

Poor lighting and open parking near IT hubs, metro and railway stations and city outskirts are turning these high-traffic zones into easy targets for theft. DH FILE PHOTO

Motor vehicle thefts are driving up property crime in Bengaluru, with cases rising from 4,270 in 2021 to 6,227 in 2025.

Police data show cases rose to 6,165 in 2023, dipped to 5,575 in 2024, and climbed again in 2025.

This translates to 14 to 16 two-wheelers reported stolen daily. Police have identified black spot areas with high footfall and poor surveillance, including Jeevan Bima Nagar, Whitefield, and parts of Electronic City, where thieves operate with precision.

"Many owners park in unlit lanes near metro stations or malls to avoid parking fees. These serve as easy pickings," a senior police officer noted.

He said professional thieves can break a handle lock and hot-wire a motorcycle in under 60 seconds.

"The process is quick. One person acts as a lookout while the other uses a master key or a T-rod to snap the lock. They don't take the bike home immediately; they park it in a different public spot for a few hours to see if it has a GPS tracker. If no one comes for it, they ride it across the state border."

> "The thieves don't take the bike home immediately; they park it in a different public spot for a few hours to see if it has a GPS tracker. If no one comes for it, they ride it across the state border.
> **SENIOR POLICE OFFICER**

Budget two-wheelers such as Hero Splendor and Honda Activa remain primary targets due to strong demand in the second-hand spare parts market.

DCP Saidulu Adavath (Whitefield) said vehicle theft in the division fell by 30 per cent in 2025 compared to 2024. He said open parking spaces and poor lighting make areas near IT companies, metro and railway stations, and outskirts vulnerable.

Large numbers of paying guest accommodations, where 40 to 50 vehicles are parked on roadsides, add to the risk.

"Due to heightened security measures, the presence of CCTV cameras, and increased inside parking, we have improved vehicle recovery. For instance, last month we recovered 65 vehicles in KR Puram itself. These gangs operate interstate, mainly targeting bikes like the Splendor because of its high demand in Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu, where forest workers and delivery executives buy them."

Many stolen vehicles are dismantled in junk yards or spare parts markets in Shivajinagar and Russell Market, where parts are sold to local garages.

Vehicles are often moved to Andhra Pradesh or Tamil Nadu within hours, reducing recovery rates.

"Technological intervention, such as GPS trackers and disc locks, is the need of the hour," the officer noted.

Body of unidentified woman found near railway track

BENGALURU, DHNS: An unidentified woman's body was found under mysterious circumstances near a railway track in Srirampura on Friday.

A senior railway police officer said passersby spotted the body next to the track and alerted the police, who went to the spot.

A spot mahazar was conducted.

The deceased, aged between 25 and 30 years, had no external injuries.

Her identity remains unknown. The exact cause of death will be ascertained after the postmortem.

The body has been shifted to a government hospital for autopsy.

A case has been registered, and further investigation is under way.

BWSSB chief on global utility panel

BENGALURU, DHNS: The Smart Water Networks Forum (SWAN) has announced its fifth Senior Utility Advisory Group (UAG), appointing Ram Prasath Manohar, Chairman of the Bangalore Water Supply and Sewerage Board (BWSSB). He is the only utility leader from India in this elite global cohort, joining peers from Australia, Canada, Portugal, Brazil, and the US.

The UAG will address key utility challenges, assess regional trends, and set strategic research priorities to guide SWAN's global initiatives.

Manohar's appointment recognises his AI- and data-driven initiatives at the BWSSB, advancing Bengaluru as a hub for smart water management and elevating India's voice in the global water technology ecosystem.

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The inspection follows recent observations by the Karnataka High Court regarding public health and safety in shared accommodations. DH FILE PHOTO

East Corp forms joint teams to inspect PG safety

Asked to submit compliance report in 15 days

BENGALURU, DHNS

The Bengaluru East City Corporation has formed joint inspection teams to review safety and building compliance at paying guest (PG) establishments.

The teams, comprising officials from the health and town planning departments, have been directed to complete a citywide inspection within 15 days and submit a compliance report.

The directive was issued by Commissioner DS Ramesh during a review meeting on Friday. The move follows recent observations by the Karnataka High Court regarding public health and safety in shared accommodations.

"Officials have been directed to take immediate action against non-compliant establishments as per the applicable rules," Ramesh stated. He said public safety cannot be compromised for commercial gain.

Taking a tough stance on delayed infrastructure projects in Mahadevapura and KR Puram zones, the commissioner instructed officials to begin blacklisting contractors who have failed to execute development works despite being awarded tenders.

To ensure better road quality, engineering officials were told to prioritise civil and drainage works before asphalting.

"Road levelling must be perfect before the final coat is laid," Ramesh noted. The corporation is also planning to develop software to track the real-time physical progress of all ongoing civil works.

Compliance check

The inspection teams will scrutinise PGs against a 10-point safety and hygiene protocol.
Key parameters include:

- **Space & safety:** A minimum of 70 sqft per occupant and a mandatory No Objection Certificate (NOC) from the fire department.
- **Surveillance:** CCTV systems must be operational with at least 90 days of data storage.
- **Hygiene:** Availability of safe drinking water, valid FSSAI certificates for kitchens, and strict adherence to waste segregation norms.
- **Legality:** Verification of whether buildings are constructed as per sanctioned plans and if they are located within the designated commercial zones.

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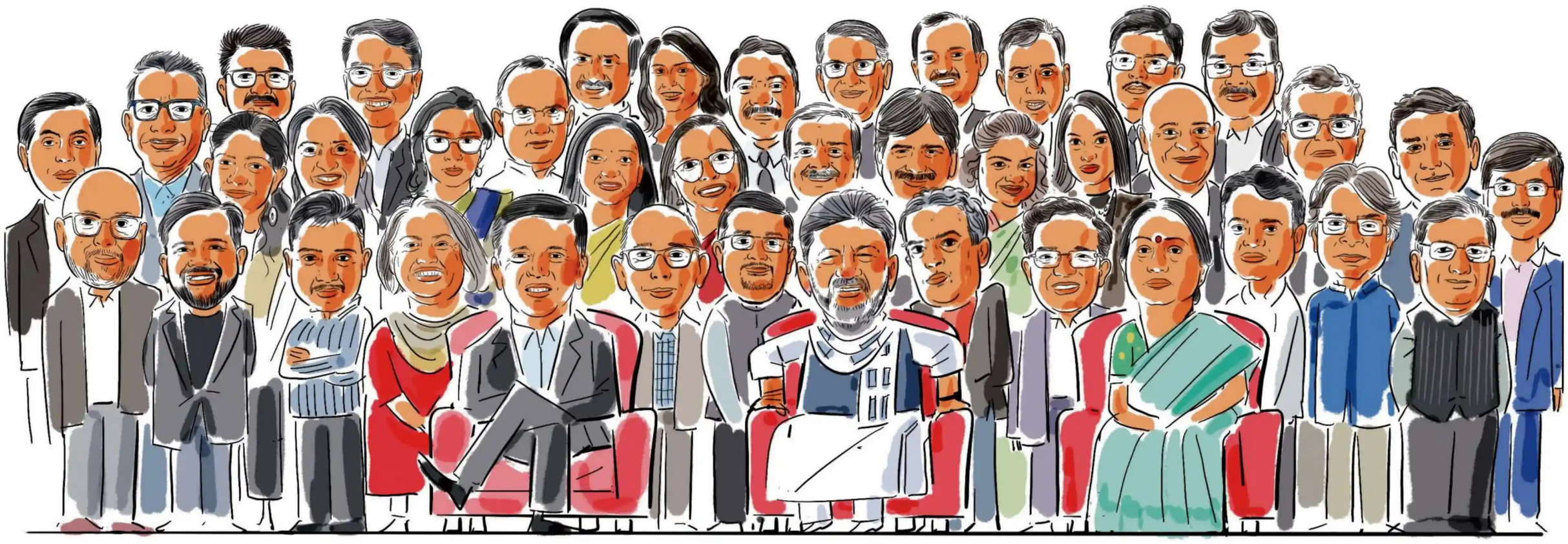

Delegates and special invitees at the Deccan Herald 2040 Summit. ILLUSTRATION: SAJITH KUMAR

NO-HITCH PITCH

Make playing easy in Bengaluru again, says Rahul Dravid

PURAVANKARA PRESENTS DH BENGALURU 2040 SUMMIT
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From wearing kid gloves to padding up for India, legend opens up on how his skills bloomed in 'garden city' with lots of open spaces, stress-free life back then

BENGALURU, DHNS

Indian cricket great Rahul Dravid on Saturday called for Bengaluru's growth story to include easier access to play for children, saying time and space for sport must not become casualties of traffic and infrastructure pressure. Delivering the keynote address at the *DH* Bengaluru 2040 Summit, Dravid rooted his address in personal memory before turning to the city's future.

"For me, Bengaluru has always been a sporting city, long before it found its place in the global map as a technology and innovation hub," said the 53-year-old cricketer-turned coach, recalling a childhood where sport was "stitched into everyday life, into school days, neighbourhoods and friendships".

Dravid spoke about growing up at St Joseph's Boys High School, where many of his memories were "more outside classes than inside".

Running around hockey fields and playing school-level cricket, he said, shaped values beyond sport but in teamwork, discipline and humility.

"Those afternoons shaped habits of effort and humility, long before anyone spoke about professional pathways or performance metrics," he said.

He remembered playing on stretches like 12th Gate Road, which for a few hours would turn into a cricket ground. "The wickets were improvised, the rules flexible, but the joy was there. Those unstructured, inclusive games were where a lasting love for sport grew," he said, adding that watching Ranji Trophy matches at the Chinnaswamy stadium with his father deepened that connection.

However, Dravid noted that while the city has expanded, its sporting infrastructure with academies - structured coaching and sports science - it has also "quietly" taken something away. He said the expansion has brought many benefits, but it has also created new challanges for families trying to find time for play.

Rahul Dravid, cricketer, delivers keynote address at the Deccan Herald Bengaluru 2040 Summit, on Friday. DH PHOTO

"Bengaluru today faces a challenge that comes with growth. The influx of people has brought opportunity, diversity, and energy. But it has also placed enormous pressure on infrastructure. Traffic, in particular, has become one of the city's biggest challenges," he said.

The consequence, he pointed out, is fewer spontaneous hours of play. In many ways, this shift is gradual, but deeply noticable in everyday life.

"Hours spent commuting often mean hours lost from play. What was once spontaneous is now something that must be carefully planned. For children especially, this loss is significant." Dravid said he sees this shift most clearly through his own children. "Even with access to facilities, supported schools and parents who value sport, creating space for free play requires intent. It has to be protected. Sometimes deliberately carved out from busy schedules and long days," he said.

"For many parents, the hesitation isn't about the value of sport, but about the time and logistics involved," he said, warning that play risks becoming "another item on an already crowded" schedule rather than a natural part of childhood.

Calling for a rethink as the city plans ahead, Dravid said, "As we build a future-ready city, the challenge before us is to reimagine how sport can once again fit seamlessly into daily life. Not only through elite pathways of entrepreneurship, but through simple, accessible opportunities to play."

He stressed that a sporting city is not defined only by infrastructure.

"It is defined by how easy it is for a child to step outside and play," he said, urging governments to protect open spaces, schools and colleges to open facilities during non-instructional hours, and corporates to support shared public spaces.

"Reintroducing the play space. When selected roads are closed for a few hours to allow children to play freely and safely. Bengaluru has always balanced tradition with progress. It is a city that shows up when it matters," he said.

The former India coach concluded by saying: "Our responsibility is clear: To ensure that every child in this city has the freedom and space to play, learn and grow through sport".

EXPANSION AT NO ONE'S EXPENSE

Build infrastructure to match city's ambition, say experts

Deepening inequalities has meant even middle-income families aren't able to buy or rent homes

BENGALURU, DHNS

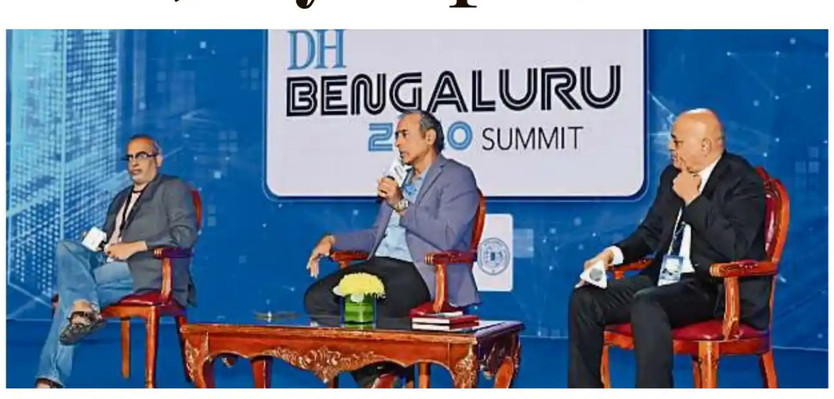
Rapid urbanisation is inevitable and Bengaluru must view its growth as an opportunity, but only if it invests aggressively not just in physical infrastructure but in social and cultural too, speakers said.

Participating in the discussion 'Framework for Bengaluru's Future Infrastructure', Mallanna Sasalu, CEO (South), Puravankara Limited, M Maheshwar Rao, Chief Commissioner, GBA, & urban affairs expert Ashwin Mahesh laid out competing and complementary visions.

Mallanna said Bengaluru's expansion has historically followed infrastructure and job creation patterns.

"Jobs were created first in South-East Bengaluru when HAL airport was operational. Development began around Wind Tunnel Road and then spread to the Outer Ring Road," he said.

After the airport shifted north, growth corridors moved accordingly. "The Metro expansion is an equaliser," he said.



(From left) Urban Affairs expert Ashwin Mahesh, GBA Chief Commissioner, M Maheshwar Rao and Puravankara Limited CEO - South Mallanna Sasalu in a panel discussion on "Framework for Bengaluru's Future Infrastructure" at the summit.

Maheshwar Rao admitted that the city had often been "playing catch-up".

Housing infrastructure, he noted, had largely been driven by market forces, raising questions whether that trend had been beneficial or detrimental.

"Bengaluru's road coverage stands at just 9% of total land area. The city's population is projected to grow by 5 million in the next decade," Rao said, adding investment in road networks and mass transit was unavoidable. With the Metro network expected to expand to 175 km, significant relief was anticipated.

Mallanna pointed out that Metro systems were rarely profitable in isolation, but generate long-term dividends.

Ashwin Mahesh said Bengaluru was facing not just a shortage of affordable housing, but also of schools and hospitals.

He cautioned against deepening inequalities, noting that even middle-income families were increasingly unable to buy or rent homes within the city.

"We are not moving fast enough on low-income housing policy," he said.

Rao reflected on infrastructure gaps in the city's core areas, which took nearly 15 years to address. "Now, complaints are emerging from outskirts," he said.

Ashwin Mahesh pointed to the TenderSURE road model as proof that the city knows what works. "It has been nearly a decade since TenderSURE roads were built. But the model has not been expanded at scale," he said.

ART ANY TIME, ANYWHERE

B'luru has all potential to be a global cultural hotspot

BENGALURU, DHNS

Bengaluru has all ingredients to be a global cultural city, but it needs to connect the dots to achieve that. This was the consensus at a panel discussion on how the tech hub can carve a distinct cultural identity for itself by 2040.

Setting the context, moderator and art consultant Nalini Malaviya said culture is not just about tradition, identity or social fabric. It also generates significant economic value. She said cultural tourism in San Francisco generates an estimated $ 1.7 billion annually.

The Louvre in Paris received around 10 million visitors annually before the pandemic. London has over 190 museums and 400 art galleries. In India, the Jaipur Literature Festival draws nearly four lakh attendees each year, while the Kochi Biennale saw a footfall of 1.6 lakh art enthusiasts in its first 20 days this ongoing edition.

Panelist and art collector Abhishek Poddar outlined three key levers Bengaluru must focus on to become a cultural destination.

The founder-trustee of the Museum of Art & Photography said that it's the rhythm that builds habit and to build a cultural rhythm, the city needs accessible venues, integration of art into gateways such as airports and public spaces, and year-round programming of events. Poddar's vision for Bengaluru is a "city where culture is not a seasonal activity, but an every day infrastructure".

Agreeing with him, co-panelist Uma Mahadevan Dasgupta, additional chief secretary and development commissioner, Karnataka, said culture thrives where there is participation, inclusivity and diversity.

She suggested late-night museum visits, guided tours, free museum days and community festivals.

(From left) Karnataka Chitrakala Parishat chairperson B L Shankar, Founder-Trustee, Museum of Art & Photography Abhishek Poddar, Additional Chief Secretary and Development Commissioner Uma Mahadevan Dasgupta, and art consultant, curator, and writer Nalini Malaviya, during a panel discussion.

Access to culture, she said, must extend beyond four walls of conventional venues and permeate neighbourhoods. She praised the emergence of new cultural venues in Bengaluru and their growing inter-use.

B L Shankar, chairman of Karnataka Chitrakala Parishath, observed that amid rapid urban construction, apartment complexes and commercial buildings should consider dedicating space for museums, theatres, or art galleries.

The evolving and tense relationship between technology and culture was also discussed.

The speakers spoke of the upside of technology, in that it enhances accessibility.

Shankar said they are in talks with Google Arts & Culture to provide global access to works in their collection, and also hope to make virtual acquisition possible.

In all, the panel agreed that what Bengaluru needs most now is coherence.

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SNAG-FREE SOLUTION

Dinesh moots congestion tax, paid parking to smoothen traffic

(From Left) Founder of KReate Foundation and NOW Venture Studio Gayathri Kuppendra Reddy, former deputy chief minister C N Ashwath Narayan, Health and Family Welfare Minister Dinesh Gundu Rao, Convenor of IISc Sustainable Transportation Lab Ashish Verma and Director (Planning and Design), Jana Urban Space, Nithya Ramesh participate in the panel discussion 'Can Bengaluru beat traffic?' at the Deccan Herald Bengaluru 2040 Summit in Bengaluru on Friday. DH PHOTO.

Suggests asking for space proof if someone buys vehicle

> We can no longer afford to allow free parking on the roadsides
> **- Dinesh Gundu Rao**

BENGALURU, DHNS

"Time has come for us to focus on implementing solutions such as congestion tax and paid parking," said Dinesh Gundu Rao, Health and family welfare minister.

Speaking on the panel 'Can Bengaluru beat traffic?', Rao said it was important to declutter the city roads and footpaths to ease traffic flow.

"Bengaluru is growing at a fast pace and it is important that we come up with solutions to address traffic congestion. We can no longer afford to allow free parking on the roadsides. That apart, we should think about other measures like asking for proof of space before someone buys a vehicle, imposing higher taxes on people who want to own multiple vehicles," he said.

Echoing the opinion, Dr C N Ashwath Narayan, former deputy chief minister, said simple measures like improving last mile connectivity and increasing the fleet of metro feeder vehicles could attract more people to use public transport.

"This is as good as disincentivising use of private vehicles. If last mile connectivity is ensured, why will someone want to drive a car," Narayan said.

While promoting public transport is the key, it is important to have domain experts manage traffic, opined Ashish Verma, convenor of IISc sustainable transportation lab.

"I suggest that traffic management should be a specialised cadre in civil services like we have for railways or telecom sector. Management of traffic is not the job of our police. No other countries do this," Verma suggested.

Pointing out that Bengaluru is known for its entrepreneurs and tech ecosystem, Gayathri Kuppendra Reddy, Founder, KReate Foundation and NOW Venture Studio, pushed for setting up an innovation district.

"If we can provide solutions for the world, we can very well work on solutions for our local problems. We have all resources. We just need to build a lab and push towards solutions. We can start with a pilot for one area and then scale it up," she said.

Panelists emphasised on the need to improve walkability, need for better footpaths and push to increase bus fleet to beat traffic.

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Whole-Time Director of Puravankara Limited Amanda Joy Puravankara, Puravankara Limited CEO - South Mallanna Sasalu, Deccan Herald Executive Editor K V Subramanya, felicitate Naresh Narasimhan (left) and Arun Pai at the event. DH PHOTO.

Atul Khatri, stand-up artist performs to lighten up the mood amid serious stuff at the event. DH PHOTO.

SMART SURVEILLANCE

'IPS officers form just 1% of police force, hits supervision quality'

Tech to help policing, but conventional vigil will not go away

BENGALURU, DHNS:

Technology with Artificial Intelligence (AI) might help change some aspects of policing, but conventional beat system and investigation will continue to remain, panelists speaking on the panel discussion 'The future of policing in Bengaluru' opined.

"No doubt that a few departments like traffic management and forensic examination will see a paradigm shift in operation. However, beat systems and engagement of police with citizens on the ground will continue. There is no doing away with it," said Pronab Mohanty, DGP (cyber command).

While digitisation and computerisation are happening rapidly even in the police department, before we embrace technology completely, there is a need to bring in some reforms, said Devyani Srivastava, senior manager-research at the National Law School of India University.

"In the police force, at present, close to 85% are lower rung officials. While 14%-15% are investigating officers, we have less than 1% IPS officers. The number of supervisors is so low that it affects accountability and supervision quality," she said.

She said there is a need to prepare local policing plan and engage more with people.

"We need to know what people on ground want before using technology to implement it," Devyani said. Given that the technology sector was growing rapidly and policing was also undergoing a rapid change, it was difficult to determine how exactly policing will be influenced by the change. However, the panelists had their own perspectives.

> In the police force, close to 85% are lower rung officials. While 14%-15% are investigating officers, we have less than 1% IPS officers
> **- Devyani Srivastava**

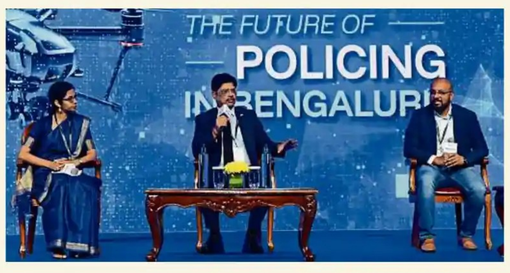
Drones would play a crucial role, said Ranjith Parakkal, MD, Eagle Eye Networks India.

"Drones are going to be a major player by 2040," Parakkal said.

That apart, face recognition will get better and can be used widely for monitoring on ground.

"Cameras can be integrated along with speakers to warn citizens. Low-cost decisions can be moved to machines," he said. Mohanty predicted that the traffic problem in the city will not persist for long.

He said surveillance might also be limited since messaging apps now use encryption and even meta data is being encrypted.



(From left) NLSIU Senior Manager - Research Devyani Srivastava, DGP (Cyber Command) Pronab Mohanty, Eagle Eye Networks India MD Ranjith Parakkal participate in a panel discussion.

CARE CLOSE TO YOU

'AI will shift healthcare from hospital beds to homes'

Experts weigh in on AI-Medtech frontier

BENGALURU, DHNS

India's healthcare system is built to treat people after they fall sick — an approach that is costly, crowded and often too late.

Experts at the panel discussion 'The AI-Medtech-Frontier: Bengaluru 2050' argued that Artificial Intelligence could flip this model by shifting care from hospitals to homes, prioritising prevention and reducing medical errors.

Leading the call for change, Dr Somashekhar S P, chairman of the Medical Advisory Board at Aster DM Healthcare, GCC and India, described hospital-based treatment as "the most expensive way to make people normal again."

He said the future of healthcare lay in preventing disease and detecting risk early — long before patients reach hospital beds. "Most of today's healthcare spending goes into sick care. Instead, we should move monitoring, screening and basic intervention into homes," he said, pointing to the rapid miniaturisation of medical devices and the rise of wearables. AI, he added, can reduce human error in diagnosis and triage, acting as a safety layer for doctors rather than a replacement. "A doctor using AI will replace a doctor who doesn't use it". Moderated by ENT surgeon and medical device innovator Dr Jagadish Chaturvedi, the panel explored how home-based AI tools could ease the load on overcrowded hospitals while improving outcomes.

Harsh Gupta, principal secretary, health and family welfare department, said government hospitals struggled with technology adoption because doctors were already overwhelmed. He cited AI systems that listen to doctor-patient conversations in any language and automatically structure clinical notes.

"If AI removes documentation burden, doctors will adopt it. Without the doctor on board, no system works," he said.

From an industry standpoint, Manish Deshmukh, CMO of Meril, said India was ready for a surge in portable diagnostics that could move screening into communities and homes — from handheld eye scanners to AI-powered chest imaging. He stressed that building tech parks and manufacturing ecosystems like Andhra Pradesh MedTech Zone was key to scaling affordable home-care technology.

Dr Geetha Manjunath, founder, CEO and VCTO of NIRAMAI Health Analytix, highlighted AI-based thermal imaging for breast cancer screening that works in clinics, camps and mobile settings. Such tools, she said, can bridge gaps between urban hospitals and rural communities by helping health workers identify high-risk patients early.

(From left) NIRAMAI Health Analytix Founder, CEO and VCTO Geetha Manjunath, Aster DM Healthcare - GCC & India Medical Advisory Board Chairman Dr Somashekhar, Principal Secretary, Health & Family Welfare Services Harsh Gupta, Meril CMO Manish Deshmukh, ENT surgeon, medical device innovator and entrepreneur Dr Jagdish Chaturvedi in a panel discussion. DH PHOTO

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MEGA MAKEOVER

Sixth corporation on the cards as govt explores Greater Bengaluru overhaul

PURAVANKARA PRESENTS DH BENGALURU 2040 SUMMIT
SPECIAL PARTNERS
GREATER BENGALURU AUTHORITY and 5 BENGALURU CITY CORPORATIONS

Bengaluru has given me everything. I want to give back now
- D K Shivakumar

BENGALURU, DHNS

The state government is exploring the formation of a sixth municipal corporation by expanding the Greater Bengaluru Area in a bid to improve infrastructure on the city outskirts.

Speaking at the *DH* Bengaluru 2040 summit on Friday, Deputy Chief Minister D K Shivakumar said that the proposal incudes upgrading about 30 panchayats and it would taken up only after the completion of civic body polls scheduled by June this year. "Developed panchayats are paying very low taxes. As a result, the government is unable to build large infrastructure in those areas," he said.

The government is examining two options: forming a sixth standalone corporation or merging these developed panchayat regions into one of the existing five corporations.

The minister said the city's growth demands a governance structure that is decentralised.

"I have planned to develop a new Bengaluru," the minister said, giving example of proposed Bidadi township which is being conceptualised as an AI City, while Nandagudi and Solur have also been identified for planned urban expansion.

He however said the Bidadi proposal has drawn political opposition, amongst others from former chief minister H D Kumaraswamy, despite lands being notified during his tenure.

The minister also flagged infrastructure gaps in north Bengaluru, including the absence of a proper sanitary line, warning that this could pose serious challenges as new developments come up.

"Bengaluru has given me everything. I want to give back now," he said, adding that civic elections are expected by June-end.

Joint Managing Director of The Printers (Mysore) Private Limited K N Tilak Kumar presents a memento to Deputy Chief Minister D K Shivakumar at the DH Bengaluru 2040 summit in Bengaluru on Friday. DH PHOTO

Deccan Herald not just a paper, but an emotion

Deputy Chief Minister D K Shivakumar lauded Deccan Herald and Prajavani publications. "These are not just newspapers but an emotion for me. I have told my son to bring the newspapers to me before I start my day. I get about 15 newspapers but I first read Deccan Herald. Its editorial pages are my favourite," he said.

Senior medial professional Gautham Machaiah, REVA University Chief Mentor, School of Computer Science Dr J B Simha, Director of School of Social Sciences & School of Law, MS Ramaiah University of Applied Sciences Gurucharan Gollerkeri, IIMB Director incharge U Dinesh Kumar, VTU VC Dr S Vidyashankar at a discussion.

HARNESS SANS HARM

AI in edu: 'Process over product' way forward, say experts

'They say it's time to alter assessment patterns as it threatens student creativity'

BENGALURU, DHNS

As artificial intelligence (AI) begins to permeate every facet of academia, the traditional methods of teaching and evaluation must undergo a radical shift, prioritising the process of thinking over the final product. This was the consensus among a panel of academic leaders at the summit.

Participating in the panel discussiobn - 'AI in Higher Education' - experts delved into the dual nature of AI as a transformative tool for productivity and a potential threat to student creativity.

Opening the discussion, U Dinesh Kumar, director incharge at IIM-B, used an analogy to explain Generative AI.

"Think of AI as a car engine and data as the fuel. If data is contaminated, engine will fail," he said.

Kumar cautioned that because AI is a probabilistic model, it often provides answers with undue confidence, even when they are inaccurate.

"AI doesn't know how to say I don't know. It will estimate an answer based on the prompt to find the result, but because different models use different data arenas, you will get different answers for the same question," Kumar explained.

Rethinking classrooms

The panel highlighted a growing concern - decline in student creativity. Citing studies where student innovation dropped as AI use rose, Gurucharan Gollerkeri, director at MS Ramaiah University of Applied Sciences, emphasised the need for AI Governance within institutions.

"At MSRUAS, we have moved from an island approach to an institutional one. We've introduced 'Computational Social Sciences' to bridge the gap between traditional humanities and data science," Gollerkeri said.

He noted that the university had altered its assessment patterns.

"We now focus on oral defense and independent problem-solving. It's not about the solution the student brings which they could have gotten from ChatGPT, but how they thought through it".

Addressing the risks of a widening educational gap, the panelists noted that while premier institutions are rapidly adopting these tools, government schools risk being left behind.

Kumar revealed an initiative to train government teachers in mathematics and computational thinking to ensure that the next generation isn't just using AI, but understanding its underlying logic.

"AI is neither a magic solution nor a threat," the moderator, senior media professional Gautham Machaiah, concluded.

"The challenge for 2040 is to harness its imagination while guarding against its pitfalls."

TALENT AS CAPITAL

CS for for balancing technology with sustainability

'City must be remembered for diversity, leadership'

BENGALURU, DHNS

Hailing Bengaluru as the upcoming deep-tech capital of the world, Chief Secretary to Government Shalini Rajneesh on Friday called for a balance between technology and sustainability while envisioning Bengaluru in 2040.

"As we look towards 2040, Bengaluru should not limit itself to be a capital of technology and innovation but also the capital of sustainability and inclusivity. We are building a city that is smarter, greener, and fairer—a city that inspires the world."

She was delivering the closing keynote address during the 5th edition of *DH* Bengaluru 2040 Summit.

Narrating an interesting anecdote from Chief Minister Siddaramaiah's recent meeting with an American ambassador, the chief secretary fondly recollected that the ambassador, on his first visit to Bengaluru, had likened the state capital to Los Angeles in the US.

Hailing Bengaluru's talent pool and ecosystem, Shalini said: "Multinational corporations no longer see Bengaluru merely as a back office—but as a nerve center for innovation, strategy, and talent. The city's unique blend of skilled professionals, cutting-edge infrastructure, and progressive policies has transformed it into a launchpad for global operations."

Reeling out statistics, the chief secretary noted that Bengaluru, which currently contributes to 40% of Karnataka's Gross State Domestic Product (GSDP), was expected to contribute to half (50%) of the state's GSDP by 2040.

"This economic strength is anchored by Bengaluru's leadership in IT and ITeS, where a workforce of 1.5 million professionals drives nearly 38% of India's IT exports. By 2040, this workforce is expected to double to 3–4 million, powering almost half of India's IT exports and reaffirming Bengaluru's role as the nation's technology capital."

She said the 2024 Savills Growth Hubs Index, which evaluates growth across 230 global cities based on economic expansion, population increase and personal wealth, ranked Bengaluru as the world's fastest-growing city.

Concluding her address, she said: "Let us pledge today that Bengaluru in 2040 will be remembered not merely for its skyscrapers and startups, but for its spirit of innovation, its celebration of diversity, and its leadership in addressing global challenges..."

State chief secretary Shalini Rajneesh delivers the closing keynote address at the summit. DH PHOTO

SMART EVOLUTION

'A young city cannot thrive on yesterday's infrastructure or assumptions'

Scale without sensibility creates stress: Amanda Puravankara

BENGALURU, DHNS

In her special address that combined personal nostalgia with a futuristic roadmap, Amanda Joy Puravankara, whole-time director of Puravankara Limited, cautioned that the evolution of Bengaluru into a 2040 mega-city must be guided by intentional design rather than mere consequence.

Speaking at the summit, Puravankara shared her journey as a native of Bengaluru.

"My father has been building in this city for 50 years. I've seen it change from a quiet, green 'garden city' with speed and ambition," she said.

"The question isn't if a mega-city is possible, but how wisely we will grow. Scale without sensibility imposes stress and technology without humanity creates a wilderness".

Highlighting the city's demographic shift, Puravankara noted that Bengaluru's median age is currently around 20 years, significantly younger than the national average.

"A young city cannot thrive on yesterday's infrastructure or assumptions. For a mother in this city, the future is about intelligent governance and an ecosystem where humans and technology collaborate," she said.

AI as civic tool

Puravankara detailed how technology is already weaving into the city's civic fabric, moving from reactive fixes to predictive maintenance. She pointed to existing AI implementations.

Traffic management: Adaptive signals that learn traffic patterns to reduce congestion.

Enforcement: AI cameras detecting violations for more efficient law enforcement.

Infrastructure: Robotics and AI identifying water leaks and underground network faults.

Environment: Digital tools tracking air quality and flood zones to inform urban planning.

Developers as civic feeders

She proposed a shift in how developers view their role. Instead of isolated projects, residential developments should act as feeders to the larger city data system. By anonymising data on energy demand, waste collection and traffic flow, private developments can help civic bodies allocate resources more efficiently.

"The role of developers is to strengthen civic systems consistently and quietly," she said, though she issued a warning on the ethics of such tech.

"AI must remain a tool for public decision-making and must not operate beyond our accountability. If we don't build systems that citizens can trust, we will never build a city that works for the people".

Puravankara called for a collaborative co-creation involving policymakers, technologists and citizens.

"We must design with heart. Innovation is no longer the challenge, the challenge is integration and scale," she concluded.

Whole-time director of Puravankara Limited Amanda Joy delivers a talk at the Deccan Herald Bengaluru 2040 Summit, in Bengaluru on Friday. DH PHOTO

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MASS-MARKET TO NICHE-MARKET

Karnataka targets over three times growth in IT jobs over five years

(From left) Partner and Executive Director of IBM Consulting Santhosh Rao, Secretary, IT/BT Department, Dr Manjula N, and Xpheno co-founder Kamal Karanth take part in a panel discussion on 'The Future of Jobs' at the Deccan Herald Bengaluru 2040 Summit, in Bengaluru on Friday. DH PHOTO

'For every 25,000 jobs lost, about 31,000 new AI-related opportunities are emerging'

BENGALURU, DHNS

The Karnataka government is aiming to more than triple IT sector employment from the current 2.5 million jobs within the next five years.

Speaking at the *DH* Bengaluru 2040 summit at a panel on 'The Future of Jobs', Dr Manjula N, secretary, IT/BT department, said, "We released the latest IT policy in the previous Bengaluru Tech Summit. Currently, there are 2.5 million jobs in the IT sector and we have the ambitious target of more than tripling the same in the next five years".

Highlighting the importance of Global Capability Centres (GCCs), she noted that they have become major contributors to Karnataka's employment landscape.

Nationally, GCCs account for 1.9 million jobs. Under Karnataka's 2024-29 GCC policy, the state plans to attract 500 new GCCs and generate 3.5 lakh jobs by 2029.

While Bengaluru continues to lead, cities like Mangaluru, Hubballi-Dharwad and Mysuru are emerging as strong employment hubs.

STPI-Bengaluru operates five sub-centres in addition to its headquarters across Karnataka. With the Union Budget announcing a tax holiday for data centres, these are expected to further boost job creation.

> We are a services-led economy, especially on software side — something we should embrace
> - Kamal Karanth

The state is also prioritising skilling initiatives backed by a strong innovation ecosystem, with startups and smaller firms actively hiring skilled talent, while exploring other sectors to expand employment opportunities.

Artificial Intelligence is reshaping the IT sector's trajectory. Santhosh Rao, partner and executive director at IBM Consulting, said AI's growing consumer-friendliness is accelerating adoption.

"With the proliferation of AI, we are seeing significant new jobs and roles being created as decision-making shifts into GCCs," he said, adding that AI augments intelligence rather than replacing it.

Addressing concerns over job losses, experts emphasised that roles are evolving.

Kamal Karanth, co-founder of Xpheno, noted a shift from mass hiring to niche hiring in IT services.

"Structurally, hiring has moved from mass-market to niche-market," he said, citing moderation in fresher recruitment in recent years.

He added that for every 25,000 jobs lost, about 31,000 new AI-related opportunities are emerging.

Emphasising India's services-led strength, he said, "We are a largely services-led economy, especially on the software side — something we should embrace".

Experts stressed continuous skilling and reskilling to stay relevant.

PANACEA FOR PARCHED CITY

Stakeholders bat for integrated water mgmt to avoid crisis

Integrate R&D, leverage technology, use treated water and revive lakes, advise experts

BENGALURU, DHNS

Officials and experts on Friday agreed that an integrated management of water informed by research and science and citizen participation was key to avoid a crisis in the coming years.

At the session titled, 'For a water secure Bengaluru', Bangalore Water Supply and Sewerage Board (BWSSB) chairman Ram Prasath Manohar said use of the treated water was the most effective way to overcome the dependency on Cauvery.

He said that of the 3,400 million litres per day (mld) of water utilised by the city, about 2,500 mld comes from Cauvery while the rest is from groundwater.

The BWSSB was tying up with the Indian Institute of Science to monitor groundwater use.

"This is the first of its kind efforts to monitor the groundwater pattern on a day-to-day basis using IOT-based censors with AI analytical tools. Going forward, we want ot launch an international agency in Bengaluru so that all the start-up companies, technology providers, policymakers and think tanks can come together as a single body to start a mechanism to explore innovative ways to manage water," he said.

H S Sudhir, founder of Gubbi Labs, said the government needs to get the low-hanging fruits by restoring the lakes.

"The water bodies in Bengaluru were built for irrigation and flood management. It's time to reimagine them as water storage structures besides flood mitigation structures. At the same time, we need to restore the canals and drains feeding them. Ten years go, our study showed that 50% of the primary canals are gone," he said.

> We need to restore the canals and drains feeding the water bodies
> - H S Sudhir, founder of Gubbi Labs

Sudhir said climate change has made it imperative for governments to adopt measures to cope with weather extremes.

"For that, we need to integrate research and development (R&D) at every level," he added.

Satish Mallya, president, Bangalore Apartments' Federation, said standardisation of sewage treatment plants (STPs) installed by apartments would boost the use of treated water.

Standardise STPs

"There are 3,500 STPs in the city and most of them are small plants installed in residential apartments. However, the output from the STPs is not the same due to lack of standardisation," he said.

Manohar acknowledged the problem. "The government has a proposal to monitor all STPs. We are trying to rope in institutions and private players to increase efficiency at different levels. In Kadubeesanahalli, for example, a private player helped us to turn secondary treated water into ultra pure water," Mallya said.

Agreeing that Cauvery river cannot meet Benglauru's demand forever, Mallya said there was the need for an integrated approach instead of one agency (pollution control board) monitoring water quality, another looking into ground water use and BWSSB dedicating to supply water.

(From left) Gubbi Labs founder H S Sudhir, BWSSB chairperson Dr Ram Prasath Manohar, and Bangalore Apartments' Federation president, Satish Mallya, take part in a session. DH PHOTO

A section of guests and invitees at the event. DH PHOTO

(From left) Program Manager, Energy for Equitable Development, WRI India, Lanvin Concessao, SELCO Foundation Director Huda Jaffer, Center for Study of Science, Technology and Policy (CSTEP) Executive Director Jai Asundi and Managing Director of Karnataka Renewable Energy Development Limited K P Rudrappaiah speak at a panel discussion. DH PHOTO

STORAGE CHALLENGE

'State's conservation policy helped save 744 kwh, avoid 500 MW fossil fuel-based projects'

Experts for holistic, equitable energy transition framework

BENGALURU, DHNS

Experts urged the government to adopt thinking systems and an integrated approach to ensure that generation and use of every unit of renewable energy is embedded within the system.

Speaking at a session on 'Bengaluru's clean energy transition', Huda Jaffer, Director, SELCO Foundation, said most of the challenges are going to be in getting people who can think in systems and convert them into practice.

"The way in which our incentives are aligned are actually siloed," she said, stressing the need for an integrated approach.

Jai Asundi, executive director, Centre for Study of Science Technology and Policy, noted that the source of energy will become more and more important as governments lay emphasis on the development of the country.

"We need to know what our demands are going to be and we have to start thinking about frameworks within which we are able to set the system right," he said.

K P Rudrappaiah, MD, Karnataka Renewable Energy Development Limited, said Karnataka was probably the first state to come up with an energy conservation policy that aims at saving energy to the tune of 744 kwh of energy.

"The policy has helped avoid fossil fuel-based projects to the tune of 500 MW," he said.

He cited the Pavagada solar park as an example of Karnataka's keen interest in energy transition.

"Besides solar, we have pushed for wind energy. We are now looking for battery storage projects. Tenders will be called soon. At the same time, we are working with GBA closely to ensure building code is implemented effectively and brought into bylaws," he added.

Jai said that harnessing the data and building a digital twin for the city to calculate energy transactions both from production as well as consumption perspective would help.

"It will also help us to manage the resources as we go forward. We have to start thinking about energy a little more holistically so that once a kW of electricity is generated, it has to be consumed as storage options are limited," he said.

Lanvin Concessao, programme manager, Energy for Equitable Development, World Resource Institute, pointed to the problem of policies being designed for a majority of the people and leaving out the poor, to stress the need for making energy transition equitable.

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Wildlife safari will resume from today: Khandre

MYSURU, DHNS: Forest Minister Eshwar B Khandre said that the wildlife safaris will resume in Bandipur and Nagarahole tiger reserves from Saturday.

"The officials should ensure that the standard operating procedures (SOPs) and guidelines are followed. If they are violated, the officials will be held responsible," he warned.

Khandre held a meeting with forest department officials of Mysuru, Chamarajanagar and Kodagu districts on Friday.

He asked them to use 50% of safari vehicles and staffers; use buses and fewer campers and jeeps.

They should be more alert in the ecologically sensitive buffer zone around Bandipur and mitigate human-animal conflict, he added.

With summer ahead, Khandre told them to take steps to stop forest fires in Bandipur, Nagarahole and Biligiri Rangaswamy Temple tiger reserve limits.

Eight arrested for stone pelting during Shivaji Jayanti procession in Bagalkot

Prohibitory orders clamped in town till February 24

BAGALKOT, DHNS

Tension prevailed in Bagalkot on Friday following the pelting of stones on the Shivaji Jayanti procession near a masjid in the town on Thursday night. The Bagalkot police arrested eight people in connection with the incident

Siddharth Goel, Superintendent of Police, told reporters, "The police have arrested Tanzeer, a Sector 10 resident who pelted stones at the procession, and seven others for obstructing the police from discharging their duty, during the Shivaji Jayanti procession at around 10 pm on Thursday. The incident occurred before the procession reached the masjid. A civilian, two constables and I suffered injuries in the incident. The situation is under control now."

The security has been beefed up with additional deployment of police personnel, the SP said and urged the citizens not to fall prey to rumours and unverified news and maintain peace and harmony.

Assistant Commissioner Santosh Jagalasar has issued orders imposing prohibitory orders in Bagalkot, Navanagar and Vidyagiri from February 20 to 24.

The police step up security in Bagalkot on Friday, following the stone pelting incident during the Shivaji Jayanti procession in the town on Thursday night. DH PHOTO

The city roads wore a deserted look with traders voluntarily shutting shops and business establishments, and witnessed sparse traffic. IGP (North Zone) Chetan Singh Rathore visited the town and took stock of the situation.

On Friday, a group of people resorted to stone pelting at a vegetable market. The police acting swiftly wielded cane and dispersed them.

Meanwhile, district incharge minister R B Timmapur has urged people not to politicise the stone-pelting incident reported during the Shobhayatra to mark Shivaji Jayanti. He said that stringent action will be taken against the culprits.

CM condemns violence, warns of strict action

BENGALURU, DHNS: Chief Minister Siddaramaiah on Friday condemned the stone-pelting incident reported during Shivaji Jayanti celebrations in Bagalkot, terming it a threat to peace and communal harmony, and warned of strict action against those responsible.

Siddaramaiah said such incidents were harmful to peace and communal harmony. "I and our government strongly condemn it. I discussed the incident with senior police officials and directed them to conduct an impartial investigation and take strict legal action against those responsible," he said.

"Some accused have already been arrested and are being questioned, and punishment for the guilty is certain," he added.

Emphasising that ensuring law and order was the government's top priority, Siddaramaiah said, "Our first priority is to provide a peaceful and fear-free living. We will not tolerate any individual or forces that disturb public peace and harmony."

He also urged the people to remain calm and not heed to any provocations and exercise restraint. The police department will perform its duty impartially," he added.

The BJP has condemned the incident and demanded strict action against the culprits.

State BJP president B Y Vijayendra said, "During the Shivaji Jayanti procession, some anti-national elements indulged in stone pelting. The police have identified those responsible, and I urge the CM and Home minister to arrest them and put them behind bars." He added that such "anti-national elements" with the mindset of Tipu Sultan and Aurangzeb should not be forgiven.

Opposition Chief Whip in Council N Ravikumar accused the Congress government of appeasement politics and alleged inadequate protection for Hindu activists and government employees.

Ravikumar alleged that deputy chief minister D K Shivakumar's 'my brothers' policy (referring to DCM addressing the cooker blast accused in the past) was responsible for increase in such incidents.

"If action had been taken earlier in incidents like pro-Pakistan slogans, such situations would not have occurred." He also alleged that stones were thrown at a procession carrying the portrait of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj near a mosque in Bagalkot and said arrests were made only after pressure from local activists.

EC Act does not treat medical expenses as compensation component, rules HC

BENGALURU, DHNS: The Karnataka High Court has said that the Employees' Compensation (EC) Act does not treat medical expenses as a component of 'compensation' payable under Section 4 and, hence, reimbursement of medical expenses is not a statutory liability imposed on the insurer.

Justice K Manmadha Rao said this while modifying the award passed to a labourer, who lost both his hands at a factory in Ranebennur.

The labourer, Bettappa, was employed at a factory and on October 31, 2013, both his hands were crushed while working on the cotton baling machine and the hands had to be amputated. He spent more than Rs five lakh on treatment and filed a claim petition seeking compensation of Rs 30 lakh.

On December 28, 2017, the Commissioner (under the EC Act), Ranebennur, awarded Rs 16,69,414 with 12% interest to Bettappa, payable by the insurance company. Challenging this order, the insurance company contended that the policy was purely an indemnity contract, under which the primary statutory liability to pay compensation rests upon the employer. The court was informed that the policy expressly excluded liability for medical expenses and interest.

Justice Manmadha Rao noted that the insurance policy placed on record excluded liability towards payment of interest under Section 4-A of the EC Act. The court further noted that no additional premium was paid to cover such a liability. Where the insurance policy specifically excludes liability towards medical expenses incurred for treatment of injuries sustained by an employee, and no premium is paid for such coverage, the insurer cannot be fastened with liability contrary to the terms of the contract, the court said.

However, the court retained the order of the commissioner in regard to the calculation of wages for determining the compensation and directed that the claimant was entitled to Rs 8,56,752 as compensation, to be paid by the insurance company.

School Edu Dept launches campaign to tackle mobile addiction among kids

Move also aimed at instilling habit of reading among schoolchildren

BENGALURU, DHNS

To wean children off their addiction to mobile phones, the Department of School Education and Literacy has launched the 'Mobile Bidi-Pustaka Hidi (Leave The Phone, Pick Up A Book)' campaign to instil the habit of reading among kids.

In its circular, the department has asked the management of schools along with the respective School Development Monitoring Committees (SDMCs) to help students overcome their addiction to mobile phones. The department has also suggested enlisting the help of the police and psychiatrists for the campaign.

The department believes that children would be forced to acknowledge the darker side of the internet when they hear about stories of cyberbullying, online fraud and digital arrest from the cyber police. "Increased use of mobile phones among children has resulted in children losing interest in academic and physical activities including sports. There is a need to put a break on this addiction," reads the department's circular.

Apart from the Department of School Education and Literacy, the Woman and Child Welfare, Health and Family Welfare, and police departments will be involved in the campaign.

The circular also attributed children's disinclination to pick up books to their addiction to mobile phones. "Digital detox is a must," noted an official from the Department of School Education and Literacy.

The campaign was actually announced by Chief Minister Siddaramaiah in his 2025 Independence Day speech.

The Department of School Education and Literacy has also enjoined on parents to limit the amount of time spent with their mobile phones, particularly when they are around children. "Many parents are often seen glued to their mobile phones even when they are with their children. Not all parents are addicted to mobile phones, but our request is that they stay away from their phones at least when their children are at home, and hold a book instead. This will, in turn, kindle an interest for reading among kids," the official added.

Teachers have been asked to communicate the same to parents at meetings. Parents have also been asked to understand why their kids are addicted to mobile phones, besides finding out what they are watching. They have also been told to restrict the use of mobile phones while kids are eating.

Schools have been tasked with designing posters to educate children about the dangers of mobile addiction, and the benefits of physical activities.

Teach Yoga, teachers told

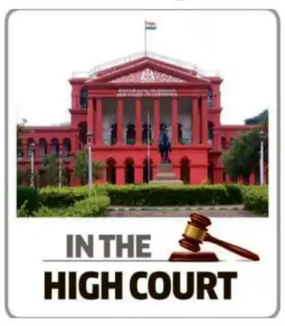
The Department of School Education and Literacy has also instructed teachers to teach students breathing techniques and Yoga so they can overcome their addiction, while also improving their powers of concentration.

This teacher was ahead of the curve

Incidentally, Chikkaveeraiah, a cluster resource teacher in Bengaluru South district, embarked on this mission as early as April last year, much before the government thought of the campaign. To that end, students at all the 14 schools in his cluster were asked to spend one hour in the library every Saturday, with parents being invited to the session as well. The Department of School Education and Literacy has confirmed that the results of this exercise have been overwhelmingly positive.

Respond to PIL on illegal sand mining in 4 weeks: HC tells govt

BENGALURU, DHNS



The Karnataka High Court has granted the state government four weeks to respond to a suo motu public interest litigation (PIL) related to illegal sand mining in various rivers across the state.

A division bench, comprising Chief Justice Vibhu Bakhru and Justice C M Poonacha, adjourned the hearing of the case to April 7 for further consideration.

On January 29, a division bench, comprising Justices D K Singh and Justice Tara Vitasta Ganju, had directed the registration of the suo motu proceeding, taking a serious note of Home Minister G Parameshwara's statement on the floor of the legislature that "big people from all parties are involved in illegal sand extraction".

On January 27, 2026, the home minister had a statement that "Illegal sand mining is a big racket. I am not giving any explanation or naming anyone, as it is a little embarrassing. I have given only a restricted answer, but it involves many influential people. I will call a meeting to discuss the issue."

"If the home minister of the state feels helpless in taking action to curb the illegal sand mining by mafias, there cannot be any hope that the said illegal activity of sand mining in the state can be curbed by the state machinery. It is a serious issue, and it requires a court-monitored investigation by a central agency or a specially constituted investigating agency or a special investigation team (SIT)," the division bench, headed by Singh, had noted in the order..

Crackdown on health facilities for violating KPME Act

BENGALURU, DHNS: The Health Department on Friday registered cases against several health establishments and imposed fines on over two dozen facilities for violation of Karnataka Private Medical Establishment (KPME) rules.

Out of 65 establishments, 28 were fined from Rs 10,000 to Rs 50,000 based on the impact of the violation. A total of Rs 9.35 lakh fine was collected.

An FIR was filed against Astha Diagnostic Centre at RMS Layout in Sahakar Nagar. Four cases were transferred to the Karnataka Medical Council for stricter actions. One hospital was ordered to return the money to patients after it refused to do so. Nineteen cases are pending for future reviews.

'No impact on health schemes, despite NHM funding delay'

BENGALURU, DHNS: Despite delays in the release of National Health Mission (NHM) funds from the Centre government, the Health Department continues to finance and implement all the schemes without disruption, said Health and Family Welfare Minister Dinesh Gundu Rao on Friday.

Addressing a press conference, he dismissed the claims of the opposition party that the department is facing a financial crisis. "We are not paralysed, we are functioning effectively."

According to data on the CT and MRI scans implemented by Suvarna Arogya Suraksha Trust, on a daily average, 15 and 20 scans are performed.

Responding to the controversy surrounding the suspension of MRI and CT scan services in government hospitals, operated by Krsnaa Diagnostics, the minister accused the opposition of misrepresenting facts after the company wrote to the government over pending payments.

He said the company had sought Rs 143 crore in dues pending from 2019 and demanded a 5% annual escalation from that year onwards. "We have clearly informed them that we cannot pay such amounts," he said.

Earlier, there was no proper regulatory system. The company's claims were accepted without scrutiny. "In the last one-and-a-half years alone, we have saved Rs 200 crore in MRI and CT scan expenditures. Only 13 hospitals were hit and arrangements were made in others."

JUMBO JOYRIDE

An elderly man gives a joy ride to three boys on his electric motorcycle as another boy pedals by on his bicycle near the Sharanabasava University in Kalaburagi. DH PHOTO/TAJUDDIN AZAD

HC steps in to help couple seeking to adopt child

BENGALURU, DHNS

The High Court of Karnataka has directed the Child Welfare Committee (CWC) to consider a Shivamogga couple's application for adopting a child they have been taking care of since 2016.

"This court is of the opinion that the paramount interest of the child's welfare, care and protection would be secured in the hands of the petitioners who have been looking after the child as their own child. Maybe, for procedural and legal oversight, they could not reach the committee as mandated under Rules 18 and 19 of the Model Rules," Justice DK Singh ruled, while disposing of the petition filed by the couple.

Justice Singh directed the couple to produce the child before the CWC in Bengaluru on March 10, 2026. He also directed the committee to proceed with the inquiry in terms of the rules and process the adoption application soon after completion of the inquiry.

"It is needless to say that the child should remain in the custody of the petitioners during the inquiry to be conducted by the CWC," the court said.

During a visit to Sri Gavisiddeshwara Swami Mutt on June 10, 2016, the couple found a three-day-old infant abandoned by its mother. On the swami's advice, they took the child to Shivamogga and enrolled it to a pre-school there.

On July 20, 2017, the CWC issued a notice to the couple regarding the legality of the custody. Subsequently, on February 6, 2020, it also issued a public notice, stating that anyone claiming to be the child's parents or heir should contact the committee. It also took custody of the child.

Challenging these proceedings, the couple approached the high court and contended that nobody had come forward claiming to be the child's parents and that the whereabouts of the parents or the mother remained unknown.

In an interim order on October 8, 2021, the court directed the CWC to hand over the child's custody to the petitioners. The child has been in their custody since. The child, now aged around 9 years, is in class 4.

The couple informed the court that their own child, who was physically disabled, had died at the age of 12 while a girl child died within four months of birth. They noted that taking the child away from them would not only be against the paramount interest of the child but also inhuman.

Rs 227 crore fake SBI loan scam: High Court refuses to quash FIR against accused

Case at hand akin to crime pot boiler, observes court

BENGALURU, DHNS

The Karnataka High Court has refused to quash proceedings in a cybercrime of hacking the State Bank of India (SBI) website and obtaining OTPs to pretend transfers of loan amount.

"It (complaint) narrates, step-by-step, how a fictitious banking edifice was erected to lull the complainant into a false sense of security; how a counterfeit digital infrastructure masquerading, as the State Bank of India was employed; and how the complainant was induced to part with enormous sums of money," Justice M Nagaprasanna said while dismissing the petitions filed by the accused in the crime registered by the Bengaluru police.

The complainant in the case is Vinayak Kabadi, a businessman from Gadag. The petitioner accused are K Balajee alias Balaji Sha, Silmia alias Silmya Fathima, both from Tamil Nadu, Seba Jeevan Sebaratnam, a native of Carshalton, Surrey, UK, currently residing in Bengaluru, and Vinay Kumar Agarwal, Bengaluru.

The prosecution case is that the accused had created a fake SBI website, generated OTP to the mobile of the complainant to make him believe that his account has been credited with Rs 227 crore, the loan that he needed to set up a sugar factory. Believing that the loan amount had been credited, the complainant transferred Rs 7.15 crore to the account of the accused as commission, which is the only transfer in the case at hand.

The petitioners contended that since the crime is registered for recovery of Rs 7.15 crore, the issue is civil in nature. It was further submitted that the complaint is registered in July 2022 for the transaction done in February 2018.

After perusing the investigation material, the court noted that the accused had created a website www.sbicf.co.in which was never in existence and generated OTP to the mobile of the complainant or even WhatsApp messages. "The case at hand is akin to a crime thriller or a crime pot boiler," Justice Nagaprasanna observed, further stating, "It is a clear case where all the accused have come together to hatch a conspiracy to cheat the complainant."

The court further said, "At this juncture, this Court is not called upon to weigh evidence or pronounce upon guilt, the only question is, whether materials disclose prima facie case, warranting continuation of proceedings. On a careful consideration as noticed hereinabove, the answer is unmistakably in the affirmative. To quash the proceedings at this stage would be to smother a serious prosecution in its infancy and to grant immunity, where proceedings cry out for a full-blown trial."

Snehamayi Krishna arrested for uploading 'morphed' audio clips to defame KAS officer

BENGALURU, DHNS: The city cybercrime police on Friday arrested Snehamayi Krishna, a Mysuru-based RTI activist, for allegedly creating and circulating fake documents and morphed audio clips on social media with the intention to defame a senior KAS officer.

Snehamayi Krishna

The arrest followed a complaint lodged by D B Natesh, a senior KAS officer and former Commissioner of MUDA.

Based on the complaint, a case was registered at the Cyber Crime Police Station on February 18 and the police gathered digital evidence that Krishna allegedly used his Facebook account to upload the complainant's photographs along with fabricated documents and morphed audio clips, and later circulated them widely on social media platforms.

The posts allegedly contained defamatory content aimed at tarnishing the reputation of the officer and misleading the public.

Krishna had earlier registered a complaint with the Lokayukta regarding the alleged MUDA site allotment scandal, naming several prominent figures, including Chief Minister Siddaramaiah and his family.

Raid on office, house

The police also raided his office and house in Mysuru. His wife Vinoda said that the police arrived with a search warrant and seized a pen drive, a hard disk, and documents.

She emphasised her husband's commitment to fighting injustice. The search concluded around 6.20 pm, with officials also confiscating a printer and a CPU.

Muzrai dept may hand over Tirumala K'taka Soudha to KSTDC

Pilgrims from state wary of commercialisation of facility

DH SPECIAL

SNEHA RAMESH
BENGALURU, DHNS

The Muzrai Department may entrust the maintenance of the Karnataka Pravasi Soudha in Tirumala, inaugurated eight months ago, to the Karnataka State Tourism Development Corporation (KSTDC). The new building has 300 rooms to accommodate pilgrims from Karnataka visiting the temple town.

The Muzrai Department believes that the KSTDC is better equipped to maintain the complex, given the corporation's expertise in the area.

The pilgrims are worried that the move might lead to the property being commercialised, and in turn, result in the rates for rooms being hiked. As of now, the price for each room ranges between Rs 2,000 and Rs 4,900.

"The Muzrai Department has spent crores of rupees on the property to help pilgrims from Karnataka. Now, handing it over to KSTDC may commercialise the property. We fear this might lead to an increase in prices," Vasanth K, who visits Tirupati at least four times a year, said.

Another visitor to Tirupati, who said that the complex's proximity to the temple was its most attractive feature, said that an increase in room rates would leave many Karnataka pilgrims disappointed.

However, Muzrai Minister Ramalinga Reddy told *DH* that the Muzrai Department will have complete control over the pricing of the accommodation, and assured travellers that the prices would stay the same. "Even in the long run, the power to decide on prices will be with the Muzrai Department. The profit will also be shared between KSTDC and the Muzrai Department. We are working out a model that will ensure that the Muzrai Department will have a say on matters," Reddy said.

The proposal will soon be placed before the cabinet for approval.

Complaints about maintenance

Though the Karnataka Pravasi Soudha building is less than a year old, there have been many complaints about poor maintenance of the complex.

"The maintenance is so poor that you cannot step into the room without wearing slippers. It feels like the property is very old," said Naresh Kumar S, a member of the Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams Trust Board.

He noted that the property was located in a prominent location on the hill, and not many states have such an advantage. "Not many states get such a vast area at that location. Karnataka has an advantage, and it is not putting it to use," he said.

Minister Ramalinga Reddy, who conceded that maintenance of the complex left much to be desired, opined that this was why the decision to rope in KSTDC was being made.

"The bedsheets should be changed every day, and the toilets need to be cleaned. There are complaints that the maintenance is very poor, and hence, we believe that roping in KSTDC for maintenance is a good idea. They have expertise in this field," he said.

Journalists seek withdrawal of order restricting media inside VS

BENGALURU, DHNS: Journalists on Friday submitted a memorandum to Chief Minister Siddaramaiah seeking withdrawal of the recent restrictions placed on movement of reporters inside the Vidhana Soudha (VS).

The memorandum pointed out that the new order issued by the Department of Personnel and Administrative Reforms disrupted existing reporting practices, besides making it difficult for reporters to speak to ministers and legislators.

A delegation of journalists met the CM after staging a symbolic protest in front of Mahatma Gandhi's statue.

Restricting journalists to the West (Kengal) gate portico would impact real-time reportage, besides limiting interactions with the members.

Siddaramaiah said that the order had been issued on his instructions, besides defending it as a 'reasonable restriction', as opposed to a complete ban. He cited security and administrative concerns, while adding that media could have access albeit under the revised norms. However, he said that the memorandum would be examined; the order on restrictions, he said, would not be withdrawn for now.

SC orders deployment of judges to finish...

SIR, From Page 1

"Now the process is stuck at the stage of claims and objections of the persons who have been included in the logical discrepancy list," it said.

The court said it was left with no other option but to involve the state judiciary.

"We are left with hardly any other option but to request the Chief Justice of Calcutta High Court to spare some serving judicial officers along with some former judicial officers in the rank of Additional District Judge or District Judge who can then in each district aid in disposal or revisiting of the claims under the logical discrepancy list. Each officer shall be assisted by the EC and officials of state government deputed to assist in the duty," the bench said.

The deputed judicial officers will adjudicate the claims and objections of those who face removal of their names from the electoral rolls.

The court took note of the EC's allegation that the state government was not sparing enough grade 'A' officers for the revision exercise, and said it had to pass the "extraordinary order" due to "extraordinary circumstances".

The court clarified that it was passing the directions in order to ensure fairness in adjudication of genuineness of documents submitted and consequent inclusion or exclusion in voter lists.

Despite the opposition of the state government, the court permitted the EC to publish a final list of voters by February 28. However, it also allowed the poll body to release supplementary lists later.

Rescued green sea turtle undergoes treatment in Karwar

KARWAR, DHNS

The green sea turtle that was rescued from the waters of an estuary of River Kali on Thursday, was treated by experts all day long on Friday.

The turtle is being housed in a tank near the Forest Department's Marine Division office in Karwar.

A team headed by Dr Manohar Nagre of the ReefWatch Marine Conservation – a Goa-based NGO – has been treating the turtle from the early hours of Friday. The turtle, which was weighed by the experts, was found to weigh 156kg, significantly higher than was initially estimated (130kg).

The green sea turtle that was rescued from an estuary of the River Kali was treated by a team of experts in Karwar on Friday. DH PHOTO

Dr Nagre confirmed that the turtle had sustained no external injuries. "Since it was entangled among the plants in the estuary, it has fallen sick. The turtle is around 60-70 years old, and appears not to have consumed any food for the past three to four days. So, we are injecting saline solution into its body," said Dr Nagre.

Marine Division Range Forest Officer Kiran Manavachari said that they were closely monitoring the turtle's recovery. "Once it recovers completely, we will release it into the sea," he said.

Chief Secretary-led panel to...

DKS, From Page 1

Despite metro connectivity on MG Road, traffic congestion has not significantly reduced, he noted, underscoring the need for both public transport and private vehicle solitons.

The minister said Bengaluru's population and private vehicle numbers are almost at par, with nearly three lakh vehicles registered every month. An estimated 40–50 lakh people enter the city daily for work, with nearly 60% of families in Kanakapura, Magadi and Kolar dependent on Bengaluru for employment.

"Once people come to Bengaluru, they do not want to return to their hometowns," he said, adding that the city remains India's global face.

He maintained that Bengaluru is viewed internationally as a safe and investment-friendly city.

The presence of international schools and relatively affordable home ownership compared to other metros have helped attract Fortune 500 companies, he said.

The government is also developing a 136-km Bengaluru Business Corridor to support economic growth.

On civic issues, he said tenders for solid waste management have been reorganised into 33 packages to curb irregularities, claiming the "garbage mafia" had been dismantled. He also said commercial hoardings have been brought back to bring revenue to the corporations.

Assuring residents on water supply, he said the city will not face a summer crisis this year. "Last year, half of the 14,000 borewells had dried up and tanker operations had become a mafia. We now operate government tankers at half the previous cost," he said. He also reiterated that civic polls will be held by June-end.

Satish Jarkiholi's statements point to corruption in govt: Vijayendra

BENGALURU, DHNS: Public Works Minister Satish Jarkiholi's admission of 'commission culture' in the administration has laid bare the corruption within the Congress government, said Karnataka BJP president B Y Vijayendra on Friday.

In a tongue-in-cheek remark targeting the Congress's 'Pancha guarantee' slogan, Vijayendra said, "The Congress loudly advertises its so-called 'Pancha guarantee', but the only guarantee people get is a 'Lancha (bribe) guarantee'."

Claiming that Congress had historically been corrupt, Satish's statements had only served to illuminate deep-seated concerns among the public, he said.

"Back in 1985, then PM Rajiv Gandhi candidly admitted that only 15 paise out of every rupee sent from New Delhi reached the intended beneficiary. Decades have passed, governments have changed and slogans have evolved but the bond between Congress and corruption appears not to have snapped," said Vijayendra.

India joins US-led alliance on AI 'Pax Silica'

Pax Silica, From Page 1

Last month, Gor invited India to join the Pax Silica alliance. Though India was not a part of the summit in Washington, New Delhi joined the alliance barely two months after its formation.

"Pax Silica is the coalition that will define the 21st century economic and technological order," said Gor, adding that the alliance is "designed to secure the entire silicon stack, from the mines where we extract critical minerals, to the fabs where we manufacture chips, to the data centres where we deploy frontier AI".

The term "Pax" is a Latin word for peace. "Silica" refers to the mineral that forms the fundamental building block of computer chips and AI systems.

"Today, as we sign the Pax Silica declaration, we say no to weaponised dependency, and we say no to blackmail. Together, we affirm that economic security is national security," said Helberg, alluding to China's dominance in the sector. China dominates mining and processing of critical minerals with market share in excess of 70%.

"India's joining the Pax Silica initiative marks a significant step forward in deepening bilateral collaboration in critical and emerging technologies and reinforces the shared commitment of both countries to resilient, trusted and future-ready supply chains," the Ministry of External Affairs said in a statement.

The development comes weeks after the two countries announced the conclusion of a trade deal to reduce tariff and non-tariff barriers.

Ambassador Gor said the India-US trade deal would be signed very soon. "In fact, even this week, we have both teams talking to each other and actively getting to a place where both will be able to sign," he said.

"We are thrilled that the interim deal is done. You have a few tweaking points that are left to do, but it's done. So the signing will happen sooner than later," Gor added.

'Big traffic problem, smart solutions': Dutch prime minister

Dutch PM, From Page 1

He was informed that the system had reduced traffic jams by almost half.

Calling Bengaluru's greenery "really amazing", he said he went for a run in the morning and found the air quality "reasonably good", certainly better than Delhi's.

"We looked it up and we compared Bangalore with The Hague, it was roughly the same, so that's what I really liked... I could smell the air," he noted.

Dr Schoof underscored that India and Europe must work closely on AI development.

He called the summit "very useful" as it put India on the map at a time when "the US and China are vigorously working on AI".

He also believes Dutch semiconductor companies ASML and NXP could work with India's talent pool. While NXP is already present in Bengaluru, ASML will soon build a centre of excellence in the city.

The prime minister said it was valuable to not only discuss political sides or mega trends in AI, but also see how it really works on the ground.

Stating that the "highly digitised" Netherlands wants to become strong and innovative in AI, he expressed hope that Dutch and Indian businesses would collaborate more closely.

Dr Schoof also expressed hope that India and the Netherlands would reach a strategic agreement encompassing semiconductors, water management, agriculture, etc.

"We are not going to tell India that we have great systems. We should (instead) work together and find out in a business way, in which way these companies and Indian companies can work closely together to deliver what India needs, and the other way around, see how we can work together to deliver what the Netherlands needs."

On US President Donald Trump's claims on Greenland, Dr Schoof said NATO's 'Arctic Century' initiative would solve the "real problem" related to the island's security by countering Russian and Chinese influence.

The prime minister added that the Netherlands welcomes migrant workers, including from India, particularly in the high-tech industry, but does not want "an overflow of migrants".

MSIL Mysore Sales International Limited
(A Government of Karnataka Undertaking)
PAPER DIVISION, MSIL House,
36 Cunningham Road, Bengaluru - 560 052
Phone : 080-22257649
No. MSIL/PD-16/2025-26 Dated: 21.02.2026

Short-Term Tender Notification
(through e-procurement portal https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in)
Short term tenders are invited for **"Selection of convertors for conversion of Vidya and Lekhak Note Books"**. Last date and time for submitting tender **is 16.03.2026 before 3.30 PM**. For more details visit **https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in**
Sd/- General Manager (Paper Division)

CITY CORPORATION VIJAYAPUR
No:CCV/PWD/EE/DMA/TND/KPP PORTAL/2025-26 /5149
Dated:18.02.2026
KPP PORTAL SHORT TERM NOTIFICATION
City Corporation Vijayapur invites tenders from eligible tenders registered the **2020-21, 2021-22, 2022-23 and 2024-15 15th Finance (Untied Grant) 01 Work, 2024-25 and 2025-26 15th Finance (Tied Grant) 01 Work, 2025-26 15th Finance (Untied Grant) 01 Work and 2025-26 Corporation General Grant 01 Work,** Tenders are called in standard tender document through KPP portal. for further details visit online web site **https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in**.
Note: 1) Tender Corrigendum and Addendum will be issued in kppp.karnataka.gov.in portal only.
1)Last date for Tender submission:03.03.2026
Sd/- Executive Engineer, City Corporation, Vijayapur
ವಾಸಾಸಂಇ/ವಿಜಯಪುರ/723/ಕೆಎಸ್ಎಂಸಿಎ/2025–26

GOVERNMENT OF KARNATAKA
(Finance Department)
FISCAL POLICY INSTITUTE (FPI)
Bangalore-Mysore Road, Kengeri, Bengaluru - 560 060.
Ph: 080-2697 1000, Website: www.fpibengaluru.karnataka.gov.in
No.: FPI-EST0PERS(INTR)/1/2026-ADMN-FPI Date: 21.02.2026
NOTIFICATION FOR INTERNSHIP PROGRAMME 2026-27
Applications are invited Notification for **Internship Programme 2026-27** at Fiscal Policy Institute on contract basis. The eligible candidates may apply in the prescribed application as detailed and available at **https://fpibengaluru.karnataka.gov.in**
Last date for receipt of completed applications by post or e-Mail is **11.03.2026 till 5.30 pm.**
Sd/- For Director, Fiscal Policy Institute (FPI)
DIPR/CP/YC/5772/2025-26

(An Autonomous Institute of Government of Karnataka)
SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE MEDICAL COLLEGE & RESEARCH INSTITUTE, BENGALURU.
No:SABVMCRI/ART/44/2025-26 **Date:12.02.2026**
NOTIFICATION
Applications are invited from eligible candidates who have below 60 years for filling up of Pharmacist post at ART Center in Bowring & Lady Curzon Hospital of this Institution on Contract Basis for a period of one year as per NACO guidelines. For further details and application form please visit institutional website **https://sabvmcri.karnataka.gov.in.**

Sl. No	Post	No's
1.	**Pharmacist :** (Monthly Remuneration Rs. 21,000/- PM)	01

Qualification : Bachelor's Degree in Pharmacy from a recognized Institute. OR Diploma in pharmacy. The candidate should be registered in State Pharmacy council
Desirable : Community candidates from HIV infected and affected as well as key communities.
Essential Experience : 3 years of expirence for Diploma holders. Good working knowledge of MS Office
Sd/- Director and Dean, SABVMCRI Bengaluru
DIPR/CP/5777/Zen/2025-26

BENGALURU WEST CITY CORPORATION
Office of the Executive Engineer, Vijayanagar Division, Shasakara Bhavana, 1st Floor, 3rd Main, Vijayanagar, Bengaluru-560040
No.: EE(VJN)/E-Auction/Tender/15/2025-26 Date: 20.02.2026
E-AUCTION NOTIFICATION FOR SHOPS (2nd Call)
The Executive Engineer (Vijayanagar), Bengaluru West City Corporation, Zone-02 has invites e-auction under reservation (Category) for 79 shops (Shop Number 1 to 79) constructed at Palike Bazaar, Vijayanagar Service Road (Card Road), near Vijayanagar Bus Stand within the limits of Ward No. 123 (145) of Vijayanagar Division.
Calender of Events: (1) Application should be submitted only through **https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in** portal. **(2)** Registration for participation in e-auction starts from **23.02.2026** and ends on **23.03.2026. (3)** Bidding for e-auction starts on **02.04.2026 at 10:00 am to 4:30 p.m. (4)** The fixed minimum price of the auction will be **Rs. 3,316.00** / one time OTD minimum amount is **Rs. 73,678.00** (Rupees Seventy Three Thousand Six Hundred and Seventy Eight Only) and the fixed maximum price of the auction will be **Rs. 12,325.00** / one time OTD maximum amount is **Rs. 2,73,884.00** (Rupees Two Lakh Seventy Three Thousand Eight Hundred and Eighty Four Only). Further details can be obtained from the above office during working hours or from the website **https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in**
Sd/- Executive Engineer (Vijayanagar), Bengaluru West City Corporation, Zone-02

KARNATAKA NEERAVARI NIGAM LIMITED
(A Govt. of Karnataka Enterprises)
Ref:1) No: EE/ RNR/UTP/PB-1/2025-26/2894 Dt: 19-02-2026
SHORT TERM RETENDER NOTIFICATION CALL-3
(Through KPP- portal system)
Percentage tenders are invited by the undersigned on behalf of the Managing Director, KNNL, Bangalore, from eligible bidders who satisfies through GO KPPP platform shall submit the bid as per Ref in two cover Electronic document system for 1 Work under the head of account 4701 for Tender amount of Rs.4.14 (without GST) crores. The details is as follows: Indent No:3210 CALL-2
(1)The contractor can have access to e tender documents for above Tenders From:20-02-2026 to 27-02-2026. 5-30 pm (2) Last Date and time for tender queries before 24-02-2026 Upto 04.00 PM (3) Technical Bid will be opened On 02-03-2026@11-30AM & financial Bid will be opened after the Approval Technical Bid at office of the Executive Engineer, KNNL, UTP Division, Ranebennur. Any changes made in the said Notification Corrected /Corrigendum's will be uploaded in the KPP-portal.
Sd/- Executive Engineer, KNNL, U.T.P. Dn, Ranebennur.
1869

BENGALURU SOUTH CITY CORPORATION
Office of the Chief Veterinary Officer (Animal Husbandry) Office, Pobbathi Maternity Hospital, 1st Floor, Sajjan Rao Circle, V.V Puram, Bengaluru-04.
No. CVO(AH)BSCC/PR/170/2025-26 Date: 20.02.2026
INVITATION FOR EOI
Two Cover System Short Term Tender
(Through GOK KPP Portal https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in only)
Chief Veterinary Officer (Animal Husbandry) HOD, BSCC invites tenders from eligible Tenderers for the services detailed in the table below.

Sl. No.	Name of the Work
1.	Short terms tender for the supply of combined vaccine (5 in 1) for stray dogs of Jayanagara Zone (Zone-1) **Approx. Amount put to tender : Rs.40.927 Lakhs, EMD in Rs. 81,855.00**

Calendar of Events : (1) Pre bid meeting will be held on **24.02.2026 12:00 PM** at the Office of the Chief Veterinary Officer (Animal Husbandry), Pobbathi Maternity Hospital 1st Floor, Sajjanrao Circle, VV Puram, Bangalore-560004. **(2)** Last Date & Time for receipt of tenders is: **03.03.2026 up to 4.00 P.M. (3)** Technical Bid opening date: **05.03.2026 at 5.00 PM. (4)** Financial Bid opening date: after the completion of Technical scrutiny.
Sd/- Chief veterinary officer (Animal Husbandry) HOD, BSCC

DECCAN HERALD
ESTABLISHED 1948

A costly growth push in Great Nicobar

With the National Green Tribunal's nod for the Great Nicobar development project, decks are being cleared for what is envisioned as a strategic and economic hub that has raised environmental concerns. The government has pitched the Rs-81,834 crore project as key to improving connectivity between Great Nicobar and the Indian mainland – about 1,200 km away – and the rest of the world. It must be noted that the NGT, an independent judicial body, has not taken many decisions that go against the government's big-ticket projects. During its environmental review, the tribunal accepted the Centre's case – without much scrutiny – that the project is strategically important and has sufficient environmental safeguards. It also accepted the argument that all details of the project cannot be made public because of its strategic importance.

The project consists of a port, an international transshipment terminal, a power plant, an airport, and a township, and will involve extensive civil and military activities on the land and in the sea. It is estimated that the project would lead to the loss of 130.75 sq km of pristine tropical forests and 84.1 sq km of tribal land. About a million trees are likely to be felled and nearly 16,150 of the 20,668 coral colonies will be translocated. Violation of tribal rights adds a layer of distress. The Shompen, a vulnerable group, depends on the forests for food and shelter. The Nicobarese tribes have stated they did not consent to the takeover of their common lands. The Galathea Bay to the south of the island, which is an ecologically sensitive area known as a nesting site for the endangered giant leatherback turtle and a marine habitat, will be turned into a port. A wildlife sanctuary there has been denotified.

The arguments on strategic grounds mute the project's ecological risks and tribal concerns

There has been a pattern in the government's defence of projects that come under the radar for potential environmental threats – denial or underplaying of the estimated damage, most of it done through unsubstantiated counter-narratives. The impact of these uninformed decisions will transcend generations. When development, national security, and the broad array of 'national interests' are propped on one side of the argument, ecological balance and the lives of tribals and other vulnerable communities end up relegated as priorities. A single tree or a coral, by itself, is a complicated ecosystem. The loss of natural systems and biodiversity in the Nicobar project cannot be overstated. In an age increasingly defined by the fallout of climate change, the damage could be wide-ranging and irreversible.

Redesign for access and efficiency

Kerbside parking issues at Kempegowda International Airport, Bengaluru, have eased with some rules being relaxed, but frequent ad hoc changes have deepened the confusion. What should be a seamless final leg of air travel has increasingly become an obstacle course of rerouted pick-ups, distant parking bays, and anxious waiting. For passengers, especially those landing late at night after delayed flights, the priority is getting home quickly. The least they expect is to haul luggage across long stretches or wait endlessly for their rides. The airport operator argues that strict lane discipline and time-bound parking are essential to eliminate "artificial congestion" and address security requirements. In theory, this is reasonable, but airport users point to several fault lines.

First is accessibility. Moving app-based taxi pick-ups to far-off parking zones triggered passenger backlash, with many forced to walk nearly 800 metres with baggage. This is not a minor inconvenience; it disproportionately affects senior citizens, families with young children, and those with mobility challenges. Second is the reduction of BMTC Vayu Vajra bus bays at Terminal 1, sending the wrong signal that private cars and taxis are being prioritised at the cost of public transport. Third is the introduction of premium pick-up zones for corporate taxis – at a price – which gives an impression that privilege is reserved for a select few who can afford to pay extra. The situation became so grave that Transport Minister Ramalinga Reddy and Chief Secretary Shalini Rajneesh had to intervene.

Congestion control at the airport's arrival kerb cannot override passenger convenience

Technology-driven approaches that align vehicle entry with real demand, reducing congestion without penalising delays beyond anyone's control, have been mooted as potential solutions. High parking charges imposed on aggregators being passed on to commuters, further inflating the cost of travel, have been flagged. While the airport operator claims that the changes are in tune with national and international standards for safety and efficiency, passengers should not bear an unreasonable burden in the process. Ultimately, the arrival kerb is a public utility that cannot be treated as a revenue stream. Unnecessary friction at the city's gateway leaves travellers with a poor first – or last – impression. The solution lies not in knee-jerk rulemaking, but in a human-centric, expert-led redesign. The airport authorities must rope in urban transport planners, accessibility experts, taxi unions, bus operators, and passenger groups to arrive at a stable, consultative framework. Only then can the airport decongest its lanes without alienating the passengers it exists to serve.

JOINT DETERRENCE

Force integration for India's future wars

Outcomes will hinge on multi-domain combat capabilities. Unified commands cannot be delayed any longer

RAJAT PANDIT

There is no two ways about it. India needs integrated theatre commands (ITCs), where all assets and manpower of the Army, Navy, and Air Force are placed under a single operational commander for specific geographical regions or tasks. The much-delayed move will ensure a unified, cost-effective, multi-domain war-fighting machinery by demolishing the existing service-specific silos. Similarly, the country also requires full-fledged tri-service commands to handle the crucial space and cyber domains, the new frontiers of warfare that now influence – and can even determine – the outcome of traditional battles of land, air, and sea.

The political leadership's abdication over the years to fully own and drive such meaningful systemic reforms has meant that the long-pending creation of ITCs has moved at an excruciatingly slow pace, with the three services fighting their own internecine battles to protect their respective turf. There are, however, strong indications now that the final nod for the creation of ITCs is in the offing before the present Chief of Defence Staff (CDS), General Anil Chauhan, completes his already extended tenure on May 30. But even after the Cabinet Committee on Security's formal approval, it will take another 12-18 months for the ITCs to take concrete shape on the ground.

It's better late than never for this most radical military reorganisation envisaged since Independence. The dire need for integrated structures, instead of *ad-hoc* arrangements, in the defence establishment has been repeatedly stressed by top-level committees right since the 1999 Kargil conflict, which exposed deep divisions among the military brass and the inability to provide "single-point military advice" to the government.

Finally, after much political dilly-dallying for almost two decades, a four-star CDS was appointed on December 31, 2019, as the 'first among equals' with the Army, Navy, and IAF chiefs, to resolve inter-service doctrinal, planning, policy, and operational issues by ushering in much-needed synergy among the three services.

The creation of ITCs, however, stalled when the first CDS, General Bipin Rawat, who was spearheading a top-down approach, died in a helicopter crash in December 2021. General Chauhan, who was brought out of retirement to be appointed as the next CDS in September 2022, has adopted a more consensual, but slower, bottom-up strategy.

As per General Chauhan, work has been fully underway on 196 specific initiatives under eight key verticals to push integration and jointness, with some lessons learnt from Operation Sindoor in May last year being incorporated into the model for ITCs. This implies that the IAF's strong objections to 'theatrisation' appear to have been addressed through

tweaks to the overall architecture as well as command-and-control structures for multi-domain operations, especially the employment of airpower.

There are, of course, complexities and technicalities that require clarity. For instance, will the theatre commanders-in-chief and the vice CDS be four-star generals like the CDS and the three service chiefs? Will the all-powerful bureaucracy accept four more four-star generals, who rank above Union government secretaries?

To whom will these theatre commanders report – the political leadership, the CDS, or the Chiefs of Staff Committee? Will the role of the service chiefs be restricted to 'raise, train, and sustain' or will they retain some operational responsibilities too? Then, there is also the question of India requiring an overarching National Security Strategy that lays down long-term national and geopolitical objectives in the face of expanding security challenges, especially from the now fused and collusive threat from China and Pakistan.

Restructuring is imperative

While the exact contours of the proposed restructuring are awaited, the original plan was to have two adversary-specific ITCs – one for the northern borders with China, with its headquarters at Lucknow, and the other for the western front with Pakistan, at Jaipur. The Maritime Theatre Command at Thiruvananthapuram, in turn, was proposed for the Indian Ocean Region as well as the larger Indo-Pacific.

The transformation is clearly needed. India currently has 17 single-service commands – Army 7, IAF 7, and Navy 3 – led by three-star generals (Lt Generals, Air Marshals or Vice Admirals), which lack the requisite synergy in planning, logistics, and operations. There are only two joint commands, the 'geographical' Andaman and Nicobar Command set up in 2001, and the 'functional' Strategic Forces Command to handle the nuclear arsenal in 2003.

Around 70 countries have a CDS-like post for integration in military planning and operations. Over 30 countries, from the United States and Russia to China and Germany, also have integrated or joint commands to boost synergy and maximise resources. The US brought in the Goldwater-Nichols Act in 1986 to fundamentally restructure its armed forces – despite stiff resistance from them – to bolster joint military operations and civilian oversight. It has 11 unified combatant commands, six of them to handle different parts of the globe and five to handle the nuclear arsenal, special operations, space, cyberspace and mobility. They report directly to the Secretary of Defence. The America-first Trump administration, of course, is now planning another major restructuring to reduce overseas commitments from Europe to West Asia.

China, in turn, restructured its People's Liberation Army into five theatre commands a decade ago to sharpen combat capabilities with better command-and-control structures. While its Western Theatre Command handles the entire 3,488-km Line of Actual Control, India has four Army and three IAF commands for the same.

The bottom line is that there should be no more hand-wringing in setting up the ITCs to enhance India's overall combat capability within budgetary constraints. With the defence budget continuing to hover just below 2% of the GDP, instead of being hiked to at least 2.5%, there is no room for inefficiency. To be future-ready for multi-domain operations, India must transition to having a lean, mean, and integrated land-air-sea-space-cyber war-fighting machinery.

(The author is a senior journalist who writes on defence and strategic issues)

RIGHT IN THE MIDDLE

Boarding with a batrachian

To this day, the mystery of the missing toad remains unsolved

USHA GAUTAM

I love these new words, like glamping. An oxymoron was merely courtship—words of opposing meaning sitting demurely side by side; their unexpected juxtaposition provoking a closer look, a smile. But here we have consummation. And new progeny. Glamorous plus camping. The offspring is far removed from its parents. After all, how could one possibly succeed in being glamorous while crouching over poky grass to pee, all the while terrified of creepy crawlies underfoot or of being sighted by a co-camper, God forbid!

I love the word and the concept. The idea that I can now enjoy being one with nature without giving up that most important of creature comforts – a fully fitted bathroom. We can now have the cake and eat it too.

Long before glamping was on the menu, I recall a memorable visit to Bandipur. Lodges operated by the forest service department were recommended as a good option. We knew that 'budget' meant basic but had not pictured the accommodation's primaeval bathrooms. Clearly human occupants had used them sparingly for a long time, given their condition, so other species had taken over. In our unit this included a giant toad. A middle-of-the-night bathroom excursion was daunting as it was, but the prospect of encountering an extra-large amphibian *en route* made it quite unthinkable! So it was decided to put the mouldy bathroom bucket to good use and safely confine the creature underneath. Not the best choice for the poor frog, forced to forgo dinner while we caught a few winks.

Meantime our own dinner arrived in a battered aluminium tiffin carrier. Its simple contents were consumed sitting in the lodge's small enclosed verandah, gazing at the glinting eyes of grazing deer. The delivery boy had instructed us strictly to remain indoors and to keep the verandah lights switched off. Outside it was pitch dark and surprisingly noisy. Forest nightlife was pulsating. Snuggled in our four-poster, behind two sets of closed doors, our refuge felt impenetrable. The night passed uneventfully, save buzzing mosquitoes that skilfully breached the bed's protective canopy.

Day starts early in the wild, even before the sun heralds its arrival. Synchronised with these rhythms, we woke before daybreak to set out on a safari. Morning ablutions were hurried as no one lingered in the bathroom, even though the upturned bucket proclaimed safety.

There was also a sense of guilt, and we couldn't wait to release our unfortunate prisoner. Standing as far back as possible and leaning dangerously forward, I quickly flipped the bucket. I tried not to imagine what I would do if the frog hopped towards me, its massive size and mottled brown colour etched in my mind.

The bucket tipped... And I froze. Where was the frog? To this day the mystery remains unsolved, and I still shudder (and laugh) recalling my one-night stand with a Bandipur batrachian.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Curb freebies to ensure fair play

Chief Justice of India Surya Kant is right to slam the state governments for releasing unchecked freebies – perhaps in light of the Tamil Nadu government transferring Rs 5,000 to women–and questioning whether they are appeasement policies without a thought for the public exchequer. Although the CJI's remarks are commendable, concerns persist regarding PM Narendra Modi's act of distributing Rs 10,000 each to over a crore of women voters in Bihar just days before the Assembly elections, in clear violation of the model code. Moreover, it was not an ongoing scheme to justify the credit. On the contrary, the TN government has not released the amount after the election dates were announced or MCC came into effect. Legislation prohibiting freebies in any form, at least a month or two before any election in the country, is in order.

Tharcius S Fernando, Chennai

Admission of defeat?

Apropos 'Commissions were, are and will be there: Satish Jarkiholi' (Feb 20), PWD Minister Satish Jarkiholi's admission that kickbacks persist and will continue exposes a deeper crisis of political responsibility. By stating that corruption is inevitable, he normalises a practice he is constitutionally bound to eradicate. The real damage lies not in stating the obvious, but in surrendering to it. Such fatalism weakens reform, demoralises honest officials, and reassures entrenched contractor-politician networks. Citizens expect leadership that tackles systemic corruption through transparent procurement, digital monitoring, and strict accountability. Instead, the minister's remark diminishes public faith in the possibility of cleaner governance.

N Sadhasiva Reddy, Bengaluru

Prioritise dam safety

The editorial, 'Dam safety: Time for a nationwide audit' (Feb 19), raises critical concerns that demand immediate attention. It rightly frames dam safety as a matter of national security, not just an engineering issue. The government must undertake a nationwide audit and implement continuous digital monitoring systems.

Jahnavi Bose, Bengaluru

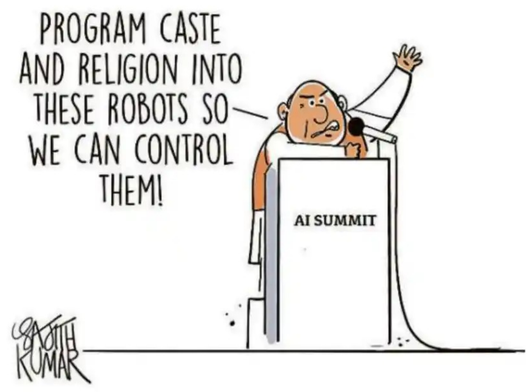
Our readers are welcome to email letters to: **letters@deccanherald.co.in** (only letters emailed – not handwritten – will be accepted). All letters must carry the sender's postal address and phone number.

SPEAK OUT

Crime is at its peak in BJP-ruled states. Criminals are fearless because the governments are protecting them. Our (Bihar's) chief minister is unconscious...
Tejashwi Yadav, RJD Chief

Don't judge me because I sin differently from you.
Dieter F Uchtdorf

TO BE PRECISE



IN PERSPECTIVE

Unlocking CSR for nutrition security

With a shift to strategic, outcome-focused investment, India's CSR capital can help bridge its nutrition gaps

SOUMYA SWAMINATHAN AND DRISHTI SHARMA

India's mandatory Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) policy channels up to Rs 30,000 crore annually into social causes – a sum that could nearly bridge the Rs 38,145 crore annual investment gap the World Bank identifies as necessary to meet South Asia's nutrition targets. Yet, as the 2030 Sustainable Development Goal deadline nears, this vast pool of capital remains a missed opportunity. Despite its scale, CSR has fallen short of being a strategic driver for nutrition security, trapped by a compliance-heavy approach rather than a long-term vision.

Nutrition security goes beyond the simple availability of food; it means reliable access to diverse, nutrient-rich diets that can withstand economic, social, and environmental pressures. Climate-related shocks – heat, droughts, and floods – can undo years of progress in one season. Unlike building physical infrastructure such as schools or Anganwadi centres, improving nutrition requires sustained investments that change behaviours and strengthen local food systems.

CSR has the potential to support this long-term effort, but it remains underused as a strategic tool. Current frameworks often treat CSR as a mandatory exercise rather than a strategic investment. Due to this, India fails to fully use the private sector strengths in management, technology, and logistics. Also, companies are not fully encouraged to align their core R&D, supply chains, and marketing strategies with national nutrition goals, even though these areas represent the true levers of social change.

These policy gaps translate into flawed execution. CSR reporting often prioritises easily verifiable outputs, such as "number of beneficiaries reached", over long-term outcomes like a sustained reduction in stunting or anemia. Annual reporting cycles discourage the multi-year interventions nutrition requires. This leads to fragmented spending on one-off activities like health camps, rather than comprehensive, climate-resilient programmes. This fragmentation is exacerbated by a geographic skew, where investment is concentrated in developed states like Maharashtra and Gujarat, bypassing high-burden regions like Uttar Pradesh and Bihar.

To unlock the full potential of CSR, we must shift from fragmented initiatives to a more strategic, collaborative model. The priority is to establish robust accountability frameworks where the government, in partnership with sector experts, provides clear guidelines. While the 2021 CSR amendments introduced impact assessments for large projects, they often remain focused on administrative compliance. By mandating reporting on measurable metrics, such as specific reductions in anemia or increases in exclusive breastfeeding, the State can publicly recognise impact over simple expenditure.

Publishing a list of high-priority geographies, like aspirational districts, could help redirect private investment to areas with the greatest need. Efficiency hinges on enabling multi-year budgeting and formalising partnerships through binding frameworks. Nutrition security requires sustained investment in human capital: workforce capacity, behaviour change communication, and climate-smart farming. These efforts demand funding cycles that transcend the limitations of annual reporting.

A powerful proof of concept for this approach is the model used to establish the Tata Institute for Genetics and Society (TIGS). Although funded through philanthropy, TIGS demonstrates the transformative potential of moving beyond short-termism to create a lasting institutional platform where interdisciplinary expertise can tackle society's most complex challenges.

Beyond beneficiary counts

Finally, we must foster a culture of shared responsibility that integrates core business operations with public health goals. This requires a shift from stand-alone projects to collaborative consortia where technology firms, agri-businesses, and pharmaceutical companies can pool expertise to support a State-led agenda.

In this model, the government acts as the primary architect, setting priorities and standards for the public good, while leveraging corporate efficiency to achieve them. Imagine a district-wide initiative where local nutritious food production is synchronised with sustainable supply chains and shared monitoring frameworks under district administration oversight. This approach would not only amplify impact and reduce overhead but also ensure that corporate research, supply chains, and marketing are held accountable to national nutrition goals.

These areas represent the true levers of social change, turning corporate expertise into a force multiplier for government systems rather than a substitute for them. India's CSR law was a pioneering step, but its potential remains locked behind a compliance-heavy mindset. To unlock this, we must shift towards strategic, outcome-focused investments that treat corporate capital as a catalyst for sustainable development.

By forging true partnerships between the government and the private sector, we can move beyond simply counting beneficiaries to realising the promise of a *Kuposhan Mukt Bharat*. This is no longer just a matter of social responsibility; it is an urgent investment in the country's future.

(Soumya is the Chairperson of M S Swaminathan Research Foundation [MSSRF]; Drishti is Principal Scientist, Health and Nutrition Policy, at MSSRF)

Any resurgence of groups tied to Islamist extremism will pose a major security threat to Bangladesh and India

Jamaat's rise and the risks ahead for Dhaka

JAMAAT-E-ISLAMI, BANGLADESH

ORIGINS (1941-47)
- Jamaat-e-Islami Bangladesh traces its roots to Jamaat-e-Islami, founded in 1941 in undivided British India by Abul Ala Maududi to promote Islamic principles and Sharia-based governance.
- After the 1947 Partition, its vision of a unified Islamic India ended. Separate wings emerged in India and Pakistan, including East Pakistan (now Bangladesh).

EAST PAKISTAN (1947-70)
In East Pakistan, JeI opposed Bengali linguistic and cultural nationalism, arguing that Muslim unity should supersede ethnic identity within a centralised Islamic framework.

1971 LIBERATION WAR
JeI rejected Bangladesh's independence movement and supported a united Pakistan. Senior leaders, members, and affiliated groups were widely accused of assisting the Pakistan Army.

BAN & RETURN (1972-79)
After Bangladesh's independence, JeI was banned, but political shifts in the late 1970s enabled gradual rehabilitation and re-entry into formal politics.

ALLIANCES & GROWTH (1980s-2000s)
JeI forged alliances, notably with the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP), and participated in coalition governments, gaining cabinet representation and administrative experience.

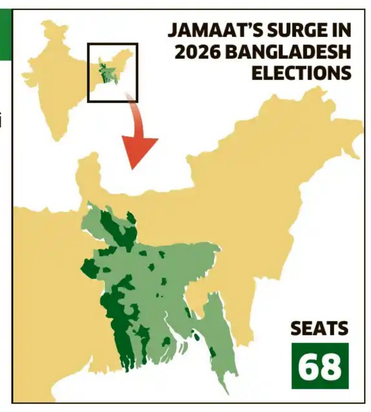
IDEOLOGICAL STAND
JeI advocates Islamisation of law, governance and public life, promoting conservative social norms and a greater religious role in state affairs.

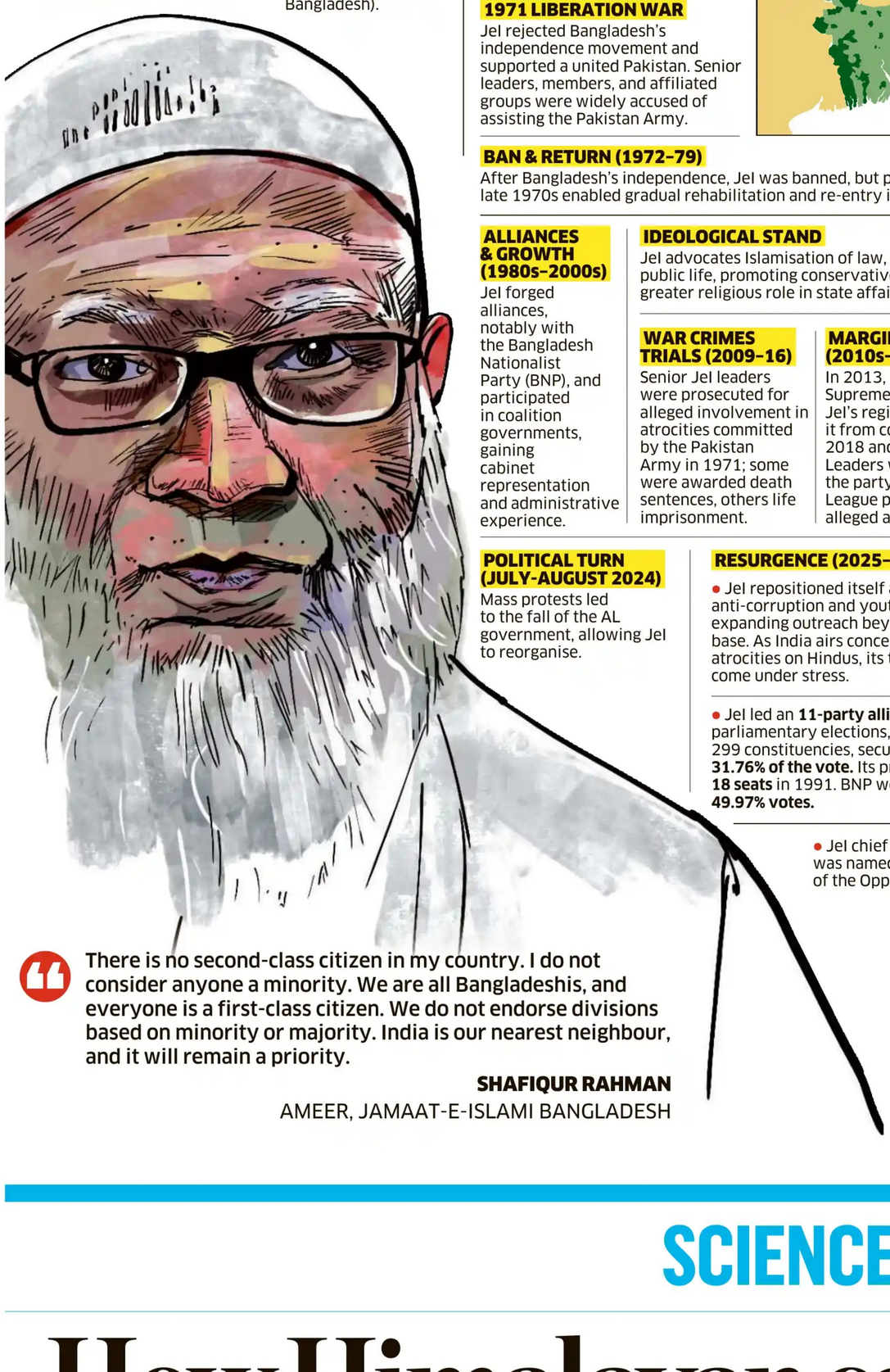
WAR CRIMES TRIALS (2009-16)
Senior JeI leaders were prosecuted for alleged involvement in atrocities committed by the Pakistan Army in 1971; some were awarded death sentences, others life imprisonment.

MARGINALISATION (2010s-2024)
In 2013, Bangladesh's Supreme Court cancelled JeI's registration, preventing it from contesting the 2014, 2018 and 2024 elections. Leaders were arrested, and the party criticised Awami League policies, particularly alleged alignment with India.

POLITICAL TURN (JULY-AUGUST 2024)
Mass protests led to the fall of the AL government, allowing JeI to reorganise.

RESURGENCE (2025-26)
- JeI repositioned itself as a disciplined, anti-corruption and youth-oriented force, expanding outreach beyond its traditional base. As India airs concerns over the atrocities on Hindus, its ties with Bangladesh come under stress.
- JeI led an **11-party alliance** in recent parliamentary elections, contesting 223 of 299 constituencies, securing **68 seats** and **31.76% of the vote.** Its previous best was **18 seats** in 1991. BNP won **209 seats with 49.97% votes.**
- JeI chief **Shafiqur Rahaman** was named Leader of the Opposition in Parliament





"There is no second-class citizen in my country. I do not consider anyone a minority. We are all Bangladeshis, and everyone is a first-class citizen. We do not endorse divisions based on minority or majority. India is our nearest neighbour, and it will remain a priority.

SHAFIQUR RAHMAN
AMEER, JAMAAT-E-ISLAMI BANGLADESH

DH ILLUSTRATION: DEEPAK HARICHANDAN

AJAI SAHNI

From being principal collaborators in Pakistan's genocide during the Liberation Struggle of 1971, through periods of proscription and electoral exclusion, the Jamaat-e-Islami Bangladesh (JeI-BD) has come a long way. It has now emerged as the second-largest party in the Jatiya Sangsad (Parliament), winning 68 of the 297 seats declared and securing a 32% vote share in the February 12 Bangladesh elections. Another nine seats went to its alliance partners, taking the total to 77. The Jamaat's strongest independent electoral showing before this was in 1991, when it won 18 seats and 12.2% of the vote.

Given JeI-BD's sanguinary history, it is not surprising that its electoral prominence should provoke a measure of alarm. Indeed, the record of the 18 months between the collapse of the Sheikh Hasina government and the national elections is chilling. The JeI and its students' wing, Islami Chhatra Shibir (ICS), along with other Islamist extremist organisations — including Ahle Hadis Andolan Bangladesh (AHAB), Bangladesh Khelafat Majlis (BKM), Hefazat-e-Islam (HeI) and Islami Andolan Bangladesh (IAB) — essentially hijacked the students' 'revolution' and, even after Hasina's flight, continued violent campaigns under the interim government. Their attacks particularly targeted minorities and individuals perceived to be aligned with the former regime, and extended as well to ideological rivals.

The JeI, moreover, anticipating a victory in the elections, sought to create a unified platform for all Islamist parties even as it launched a campaign of violent clashes with the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP). JeI and BNP cadres fought continuous street battles, and partial data indicates that at least 276 JeI and BNP cadres were injured in such confrontations, and another 40 in clashes between ICS and the student organisation affiliated with BNP, Jatiotabadi Chatra Dal (JCD), in 2025. A further 128 cadres were injured in such clashes in 2026 (up to February 12).

It is important to recognise that the resurgence of the JeI-ICS complex, as well as other Islamist extremist formations in the country, received significant encouragement from Mohammad Yunus' interim government. First, the ban on the JeI imposed by the Hasina government was lifted, and shortly thereafter, the Election Commission reinstated JeI's registration as a political party. Leaders and cadres in jail were released, including many convicted for heinous crimes, along with other similar offenders from various Islamist formations. Among those released was ATM Azharul Islam, who had been on death row for 14 years in a 1971 crimes-against-humanity case. He was abruptly 'acquitted' on May 27, 2025, and shortly thereafter appointed as the JeI's Naib-e-Amir.

The last development is symbolic of the JeI's sustained duplicity. The JeI's Ameer Shafiqur Rahman issued a somewhat ambivalent apology to anyone who "has ever been hurt by his party since 1947", but those guilty of the 1971 genocide continue to hold prominent positions in the organisation. It is useful to recall that JeI's history is drenched in blood from the very moment of the country's birth pangs in 1971.

In another development symbolising the Yunus regime's benevolence towards JeI extremists, on March 12, 2025, convicted war criminal and former JeI leader Abul Kalam Azad, alias Bachchu Razakar, who had been on the run since the ICT sentenced him to death, was allowed to return to Dhaka from Pakistan.

It is important to understand the role of the ecosystem created by the interim government, within which JeI-ICS and other Islamist formations thrived. Islamist radicals were given a free hand by the Yunus government after August 2024. The JeI and its allies enjoyed exceptional impunity. At least 700 inmates, including convicted Islamist militants, fled from jail under the interim government — among them 70 Islamist extremists and death row convicts. Worse, 174 known criminals, including 11 top-listed offenders, gangsters and extremist group leaders, were given bail. These included Ansarullah Bangla Team (ABT) 'chief' Jashimuddin Rahmani; Abdus Salam Pintu (a Harkat-ul-Jihad Islami Bangladesh aide); and Abdullahil Aman Azmi and Ahmad Bin Quasem (JeI).

While the JeI has maintained a formal distance from Islamist terrorist formations, investigations in Bangladesh have reported strong recruitment overlaps between JeI-ICS networks and various jihadi groups, prominently including the Jagrata Muslim Janata Bangladesh (JMJB), the group responsible for the series of 469 bombings across 64 districts of the country in 2005, Jamaat-ul-Mujahideen Bangladesh (JMB) and its offshoot, Neo-JMB, as well as Harkat-ul-Jihad al-Islami Bangladesh (HuJI-B), and the ABT.

Any sustained resurgence of these groups under a regime in Dhaka that seeks to accommodate Islamist extremism would constitute a significant security threat to both Bangladesh and India. During the 2005-2010 period, HuJI-B was involved in a series of joint terrorist strikes across India. The JMB and Neo-JMB have had a long presence in the Northeast, West Bengal, Bihar and Jharkhand, maintaining safe houses and bomb-making units (recall the Burdwan blast of 2014). However, Hasina's 'zero tolerance for terrorism' policy and India's extensive crackdown on these groups dramatically reduced the risks. Nevertheless, any ideological normalisation of JeI's influence would lower barriers to recruitment into such militant formations.

It is necessary, however, to recognise a range of mitigating factors. While JeI's potential for subversion — directly and through loosely affiliated groups — cannot be ignored, it is worth noting that both Prime Minister Tarique Rahman and the JeI leadership have made some gestures of reconciliation in the days following the election results. Rahman has also spoken of a 'reset' in relations with India. The JeI's engagement in the democratic process, as the largest bloc in Opposition, may temper ideological rigidity, particularly as the vote itself demonstrated a wider rejection of extremism and violence.

It is also important to recall that the JeI failed spectacularly in its efforts to stitch together a unified platform of Islamist parties before the elections, and the numbers it has secured in Parliament are at least partly a consequence of the vacuum created by the ban on the participation of the Awami League. Economic imperatives may also prove to be a stabilising force, as the country's export-oriented economy has little tolerance for domestic disruption.

(The writer is the Executive Director of the Institute for Conflict Management and South Asia Terrorism Portal)

SCIENCE & ENVIRONMENT

How Himalayan carnivores rewire survival in Spiti

Snow leopards, wolves, foxes and free-ranging dogs coexist in Spiti Valley, but domesticated dogs may be a threat to them, writes Sneha Mahale

High in the Trans-Himalayan landscape of Spiti, life is shaped by extremes. The air is thin, winters plunge to -40°C, and food is scarce for much of the year. For the region's carnivores—snow leopards, Himalayan wolves, red foxes, and an increasingly visible newcomer, free-ranging dogs—survival depends on navigating a landscape under growing human pressure.

New research shows how these predators are quietly rearranging their lives to coexist. "Studying them together is essential because none of them functions in isolation; each species' behaviour and survival are shaped by the others and by human influence," says Priyanka Justa, PhD student at the Wildlife Institute of India (WII) and the study's co-author.

Wolves avoided settlements more strongly and preferred less disturbed areas. Red foxes were common in areas used by other carnivores. Free-ranging dogs were common in the area. IMAGE courtesy: WII camera trap/ Priyanka Justa.

A landscape under pressure

Himachal Pradesh's Spiti Valley lies within the Cold Desert Biosphere Reserve, spanning elevations from about 3,600 to over 6,700 metres. Snow leopards and Himalayan wolves occupy the top of the food web, while red foxes operate as smaller, yet highly adaptable mid-ranking predators. In recent decades, free-ranging dogs have joined this carnivore group, subsidised by food waste from villages and tourism.

"Spiti is almost a natural stress test for understanding carnivore coexistence. Everything is scarce, seasonal, and highly concentrated. This naturally intensifies competition and makes trade-offs between risk, food, and space much sharper and easier to detect," says Justa.

For this study, the researchers focused on five areas across Spiti Valley (Chandratal, Kibber, Pin Valley, Mane, and Gue), each differing in tourism intensity, settlement density, livestock presence, predator-prey dynamics, and the presence of dogs. Together, they represented a gradient of human impact, from heavily visited trekking hubs to relatively restricted border zones.

Given the animals' elusive nature and large ranges, the team relied on camera traps to observe them. Over two field seasons between August 2021 and August 2022, they deployed 205 motion-sensitive cameras across the five sites, accumulating more than 8,000 camera-trap days.

Cameras were placed along trails, ridgelines, and areas with signs of animal movement, capturing images day and night. Rather than estimating population sizes, the researchers focused on space use, where species occurred, how often, and under what conditions. "The biggest challenge was that the species we were studying operate at very different spatial scales. To make a single, comparable dataset, we had to design a camera-trap grid that was fine enough to capture foxes and dogs, even though this meant it was coarser than ideal for wide-ranging species like wolves and snow leopards," says Justa.

Who overlaps, who avoids

The results showed that Spiti's carnivores share space in uneven ways. Red foxes proved the most flexible, frequently overlapping with other carnivores. They were more common where prey was abundant, even in areas used by snow leopards, wolves, or dogs, likely because foxes can exploit scavenging opportunities.

Dogs, by contrast, stayed close to people, clustering around roads, settlements, and waste sites. These areas became zones of higher risk and competition. "Free-ranging dogs have become a central driver of how the entire system works. They are not just another species in the landscape. Their sheer numbers, driven by human subsidies, are reshaping how native carnivores use space and time," says Salvador Lyngdoh, scientist at the WII and the study's corresponding author. While dogs rarely overlapped with snow leopards, they showed an overlap with wolves, largely because both used roads and open terrain.

When the animals could not fully avoid one another in space, they adjusted in time instead. Snow leopards, red foxes, and dogs all showed two daily peaks of activity, but the timing of these peaks shifted. Foxes became more nocturnal in areas with dogs, reducing the chance of encounters. They, however, did not significantly change their behaviour when sharing space with snow leopards. Snow leopards cut back early-morning activity where dogs were common.

"The most surprising result was that snow leopards did not respond to human pressure by simply abandoning human-dominated areas. Instead, they continue to use the same spaces but adjust when they are active," says Lyngdoh.

Wolves responded differently. They avoided settlements more strongly and preferred less disturbed areas, while dogs showed little behavioural change, regardless of human presence.

Why this matters

The study highlights how Spiti's carnivores are adapting to cope with competition and increasing human pressure. It also raises red flags. "Instead of being structured mainly by body size and natural prey, the predator hierarchy is increasingly structured by access to human subsidies and tolerance of human disturbance. Dogs are effectively becoming the dominant carnivore around settlements, foxes persist through flexibility, and apex predators like snow leopards are being pushed into making risky trade-offs," says Lyngdoh.

This makes the system fragile. Behavioural adjustment can only absorb so much pressure. "The most immediate and effective intervention is to manage the dog problem at key hotspot settlements through sterilisation, vaccination, and proper waste management, while protecting quiet core areas where native carnivores can still find refuge," says Lyngdoh. Without addressing this human-mediated pressure, the delicate balance that allows Spiti's predators to coexist may not last, he says.

Mongabay India / TWF

DID YOU KNOW?

Endemic fish shape ecological patterns in Western Ghats

Biodiversity is unevenly distributed worldwide, and species richness is its most common measure. Species confined to small geographic areas are termed endemics; the more species an area contains, the "hotter" its hotspot. The Western Ghats—or Sahyadri—stretch nearly 1,600 km along India's west coast and form a dramatic ecological divide between the monsoon-drenched western escarpment and the drier eastern slopes. Long recognised as a global biodiversity hotspot, the region continues to yield new insights. A recent multi-institutional study of freshwater fish shows that simply counting endemic species does not fully explain the structure of biodiversity.

Researchers analysed 325 freshwater fish species, 223 of them endemic, across 59 river basins originating in the Ghats. They classified endemic fish using a two-dimensional framework: geographic range (widespread or restricted) and functional traits (distinct or redundant). This produced four ecological categories, including rare species (restricted and trait-distinct) and common species (widespread and trait-redundant). Although conventional metrics suggested little difference between east- and west-flowing rivers—endemic numbers rose with overall richness—the functional analysis revealed a striking contrast.

West-flowing rivers, draining into the Arabian Sea, harboured more endemic species than expected, particularly those that were geographically widespread yet functionally distinct. These species drive both taxonomic and functional convergence: communities become more similar in composition while retaining high functional diversity. In contrast, east-flowing basins showed taxonomic divergence—species differed between rivers—but functional convergence, with communities composed of ecologically similar fish and lower overall functional diversity.

Environmental processes appear central to this divide. Higher ecosystem productivity on the western slopes, reflected in evapotranspiration rates, strongly predicted endemic richness. Intense monsoon rainfall also creates temporary hydrological connections among western basins, enabling dispersal and allowing distinct species to occupy multiple rivers. Such connectivity is rare in the east, where basins are farther apart, and rainfall is lower. Paradoxically, despite being part of larger peninsular river systems, eastern basins are less ecologically connected than their western counterparts.

The study, published in the Proceedings of the Royal Society B and led by Rohitashva Shukla, further found that when non-endemic species were included, most east–west differences disappeared, showing that endemics disproportionately shape ecological structure. This has urgent conservation implications. River linking, hydropower projects, invasive species and climate-driven extremes could disrupt natural connectivity and productivity, reshaping fish communities and weakening ecosystem resilience. Protecting habitat heterogeneity and basin-level connectivity will be critical to sustaining the evolutionary legacy and ecological integrity of the Western Ghats.

-Seshadri K S

Gujarat govt alters marriage rules to counter 'love jihad'

AHMEDABAD, DHNS: Gujarat Deputy Chief Minister Harsh Sanghavi on Friday announced that the state government was going to change its marriage registration procedure to stop its misuse by "anti-social elements" and particularly by those who hide their identity to "trap daughters of Gujarat" for "love jihad".

Sanghavi announced the changes in the ongoing Assembly session in Gandhinagar. They will become mandatory for obtaining a marriage registration certificate in the state.

Under the new rule, the bride and groom will have to submit a declaration stating that they have informed their parents about the marriage, besides giving their parents' identity proof, phone numbers, residential proofs, and some other details.

One of the major changes in the Gujarat Marriage Registration Act, 2006, is a process under which the assistant registrar will have to notify the parents 10 days after receiving applications.

Highway toll plazas may go cashless from April 1

Once implemented, commuters will have to pay using UPI & FASTag

AJITH ATHRADY
NEW DELHI, DHNS

To create a fully digital National Highway tolling ecosystem, the NHAI plans to discontinue cash payments at highway toll plazas from April 1.

Once implemented, national highway commuters will have to use only digital modes such as FASTag or UPI for toll payments. This means there are no cash lanes at toll plazas.

The proposed measure aims at consolidating the gains achieved in Electronic Toll Collection and strengthening the efficiency & reliability of National Highway fee plaza operations, the National Highway Authority of India said in a statement.

The transition will help to enhance 'Ease of Commuting' for national highway users by improving lane throughput, reducing congestion at fee plazas, and bringing greater consistency and transparency in toll transactions.

A complete transition to a digital-only mode of payment will strengthen operational efficiency, improve traffic management, minimise delays, and enhance the overall National Highway user experience at over 1,150 fee plazas on various National Highways and Expressways in the country.

In the past few years, over 98% penetration of FASTag has significantly transformed toll collection practices in the country. At present, an overwhelming proportion of toll transactions are processed electronically through RFID-enabled FASTags affixed to vehicles, facilitating seamless and contactless movement across toll plazas, the NHAI said.

Further, UPI payment facilities have been operationalised at the toll plazas, ensuring availability of instant and accessible digital payment options for commuters nationwide.

Narrow escape for 100 students in Hyderabad fire

HYDERABAD, DHNS: Around 100 students on the fourth floor of a coaching centre had a miraculous escape when a major fire broke out in a building in Hyderabad's Ameerpet, on Friday.

As flames spread, many students found themselves trapped inside. Police and fire tenders rushed to the scene and launched swift rescue operations. Students were safely evacuated using ladders from the fourth-floor balconies. No casualties were reported, though thick smoke engulfed parts of the building, sparking panic among students and other occupants.

Fire officials said that a ground-floor short circuit led to the fire as shopkeepers nearby stamped out sparks fast in Aditya Enclave's Annapurna Block, capping it with heavy smoke.

RELIGIOUS OFFERING

People offer prayers on the first Friday of Ramzan at the Jama Masjid in New Delhi. PTI

Kashmir faces severe winter precipitation deficit

SRINAGAR, DHNS: Jammu and Kashmir is witnessing a severe precipitation deficit, above-normal winter temperatures and sharply reduced snowfall, trends scientists link to climate change in the western Himalayas.

Data from the India Meteorological Department in Srinagar show precipitation shortfalls exceeding 50% this winter, with the Valley's plains largely snow-free and deficits comparable to the previous two dry seasons.

During the 40-day Chillai Kalan period, precipitation has been about 85% below normal from November to mid-February, with some areas reporting near-total rain and snow deficits.

Unusually warm conditions persisted, with Srinagar at 20.1°C and Jammu at 27°C, limiting snowfall and accelerating glacial melt across the Himalayan region. "Precipitation deficits coupled with rising temperatures indicate a changing climate regime," said climate analyst Prof Anjal Prakash.

Maha Muslim quota scrapping challenged in HC

MUMBAI, DHNS: Days after the Maharashtra government scrapped the 12-year-old 5% quota for Muslims in education, semi-government and government jobs, the decision was challenged in the Bombay High Court on Friday.

A Government Resolution (GR) cancelling the resolution was notified on February 17.

The petitioners sought an urgent hearing.

Unable to bear labour pain, UP woman slits stomach

SANJAY PANDEY
LUCKNOW, DHNS

Unable to bear labour pain, a woman in Uttar Pradesh's Bahraich allegedly slit her stomach with a knife in an attempt to deliver her child.

Nankai Devi was nine months pregnant. As she lay bleeding and writhing in pain, neighbours rushed her to a community health centre, where she gave birth to a baby girl.

She was shifted to Lucknow after her condition deteriorated due to excessive bleeding, reports said. A doctor said the woman had suffered deep cuts.

A video that went viral on social media showed the woman saying she slit her stomach as she was unable to bear the pain. Some reports claimed she used a blade.

Neighbours said the woman had been living alone since the death of her husband about six months ago.

Raj Kundra granted bail

MUMBAI, DHNS: A special court here granted bail to businessman Raj Kundra in the Rs 150 crore Bitcoin scam case. The case dates back to April 2024, when the ED attached properties worth Rs 97.79 crores belonging to the couple, alleging that they had collected large sums of funds in Bitcoin.

Though Kundra was not arrested during the probe, he was summoned last month after the Special Court took cognisance of the ED's chargesheet.

MISCELLANY

◆ COMICS ◆

Blondie

WELL, KIDS, SINCE MOM HAD TO WORK LATE TONIGHT, I WAS IN CHARGE OF DINNER...WHAT DO YOU THINK?
THIS IS LOU'S MEATLOAF AND POTATOES FROM THE DINER, ISN'T IT, DADDY?
YOUR MOM'S GOT HER TRICKS... AND I'VE GOT MINE!

Hagar The Horrible

LISTEN UP! I'M CUTTING WASTEFUL SPENDING! NO MORE BOTTLES OF BEER DURING OUR STRATEGY DINNERS!
GRRR
BAH!
PITCHERS ARE MORE COST-EFFECTIVE!
SKOAL!

Beetle Bailey

LOOK AT THE FUNNY SARGE PUMPKIN I CARVED FOR THE PARTY TONIGHT
UH, BEETLE...
GREG T MORT WALKER
HERE! IT CAN BE YOUR COSTUME!
FLOOP

Peanuts

"DEAR CONTRIBUTOR, WE HAVE RECEIVED YOUR MANUSCRIPT ON RUNNING"
"IT DOES NOT SUIT OUR PRESENT NEEDS"
"HOWEVER, WE WOULD LIKE TO THANK YOU FOR CONSIDERING US"
"BUT WE'RE NOT GOING TO!"

Marvin

YOU'RE MEETING YOUR FRIENDS WEARING THAT? I THOUGHT BEING DRESSED AS A CAT WAS HUMILIATING
NOT WHEN I TELL THE STORY THAT THIS USED TO BE A REAL LION

JUMBLE

THAT SCRAMBLED WORD GAME
By David L. Hoyt and Jeff Knurek

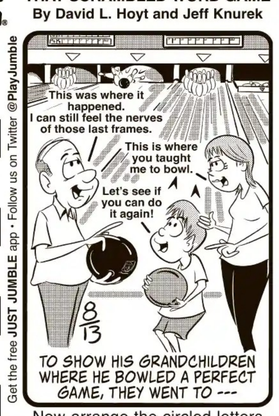
Unscramble these Jumbles, one letter to each square, to form four ordinary words.

MPHOC

SAEYT

RLEYME

NDYEOK


This was where it happened.
I can still feel the nerves of those last frames.
This is where you taught me to bowl.
Let's see if you can do it again!
8/13
TO SHOW HIS GRANDCHILDREN WHERE HE BOWLED A PERFECT GAME, THEY WENT TO ---

Get the free JUST JUMBLE app • Follow us on Twitter @PlayJumble

Now arrange the circled letters to form the surprise answer, as suggested by the above cartoon.

Answer here: _____ (Answers tomorrow)

Yesterday's Jumbles: GROWL MODEM VENDOR PARDON
Answer: The 20-foot anaconda was blocking traffic and was kindly asked to — MOVE ALONG

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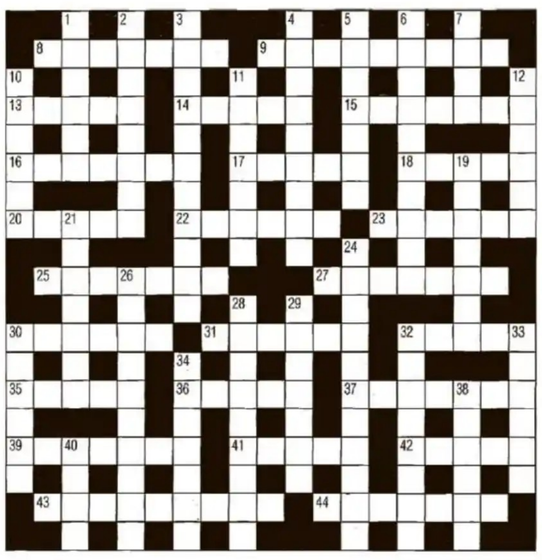
CROSSWORD CHALLENGE 4028



CRYPTIC

ACROSS
8 Burnt the fish – a kind of mullet (7)
9 A tightwad toff, but he does wish to help (5,4)
13 Cast in "Mystified" (5)
14 The sequence of events in the wake of (5)
15 Am taking these round, as before (3,4)
16 An opportunity for a key man? (7)
17 So the chap on the outside is the TV lawyer (5)
18 Fly the cockney across (5)
20 Practise golf in the children's playground (5)
22 Get really confused when you argue with (6)
23 Refused to authorise "The Sound of Music" (6)
25 He seems surprised by the hors d'oeuvre (7)
27 A competition, as opposed to a match (7)
30 Dismissed as "an ignominious defeat all round" (3,3)
31 The R in "country," or "wrench" (6)
32 Puts the money safely away for tips (5)
35 Let out again and given food outside (5)
36 It's twaddle, so go back in and rest (5)
37 Order a c-cooker (7)
39 Walk after mum with a rather ungainly walk (7)
41 Just a little heat for the empty room (5)
42 The land at first does have an appeal (5)
43 Not allowing to fly with not much training (9)
44 Sounded furious and ran back into the vehicle (7)

DOWN
1 Make you pay for, when you order (6)
2 Have to bring round to see Robert (8)
3 Be given collectively, at the meeting (3-8)
4 Just act naturally and don't go in fancy dress (2,7)
5 Isn't off beat in it for a moment (7)
6 From the start, he was crazy about the little darling (10)
7 She stands for everything English (4)
10 On the way to Oslo, changed seats (6)
11 Off-cream on the outside, the inside in red (7)
12 Were apprehensive when a "35" ran amok (6)
19 It's five to nine, so carve the meat (7)
21 Very emotional at the tennis break point (7)
24 By which you start to lay claim to the pillow? (4,7)
26 More or less the first thing you associate with a fairground? (10)
28 Pop or otherwise, music right for the occasion (9)
29 The cat, as usual, then scuttles inside (7)
30 You'll withhold consent? Rubbish! (6)
32 Immediately after the shed, change direction (2,6)
33 The case is a female, at hospital (6)
34 When the working week comes to a close, they're palsy-walsy! (7)
38 Stronger and less slovenly (6)
40 Measure the crack the rain's come through (4)

ACROSS
8 Bounce back (7)
9 Six-sided (9)
13 Concede (5)
14 Lubricated (5)
15 Obstetrics nurse (7)
16 Type of house (7)
17 Heathen (5)
18 Secret agents (5)
20 Scope (5)
22 Attack (6)
23 Colour (6)
25 Worry (7)
27 Enslavement (7)
30 Fears (6)
31 Tremble (6)
32 Hold-up (5)
35 Entrance hall (5)
36 Steam bath (5)
37 Musical instrument (7)
39 Type of glass (7)
41 Storey (5)
42 Male relative (5)
43 Sports hall (9)
44 Spire (7)

DOWN
1 Allow (6)
2 Computer programs (8)
3 Unbearable (11)
4 Tarnish on copper (9)
5 Agriculture (7)
6 Deign (10)
7 Cab (4)
10 Crockery item (6)
11 Ceremonial flight (7)
12 Oscillate (6)
19 Unlawful (7)
21 Child's room (7)
24 Support with evidence (11)
26 Comprehend (10)
28 Driver (9)
29 Pilot (7)
30 Flaw (6)
32 Anxiety (8)
33 Over there (6)
34 Inutile (7)
38 Supernatural (6)
40 Toy (2-2)

SOLUTIONS TO CROSSWORD 12358

CRYPTIC
ACROSS: 1, C-lash 6, Verse 9, Wave-red 10, S-wee-t. 11, Reins 12, Reign 13, Loll-i.e.-s 15, To-y 17, Ones 18, Moros-E 19, Widen 20, The lot 22, Ta-me 24, Her 25, Citi-Z-en 26, Skirt 27, Adi-os 28, Da-LL-y 29, Surge-on 30, Dr-O-op 31, Terry
DOWN: 2, Laws-on 3, S-well-S 4, Hat 5, Fetes 6, Verge on 7, E-den 8, S-a-NT-OS 12, R-emit 13, Lout-h 14, Lever 15, Top-A-Z 16, Yemen 18, Merit (remit) 19, Works up 21, Header 22, Tisane 23, Med-lar 25, Cra-G-s 26, So-so 28, Dot

EASY
ACROSS: 1, Radar 6, Cubes 9, Caravan 10, Album 11, Lithe 12, Limit 13, Leveret 15, Act 17, Open 18, Braise 19, Sabre 20, Thrill 22, Ales 24, SOS 25, Athlete 26, Snipe 27, Fetid 28, Bonds 29, Tedious 30, Steer 31, Stash
DOWN: 2, Asleep 3, Acumen 4, Ram 5, Habit 6, Calibre 7, Unit 8, Ethics 12, Legal 13, Loots 14, Veers 15, Aisle 16, Tense 18, Brute 19, Slender 21, Honest 22, Almost 23, Etudes 25, April 26, Site 28, Bus

◆SU-DO-KU-6836◆

5					4			
	8	4		1	7			2
7							1	
4		8						
	5	2		3		6	4	
						8		9
	6							3
2			3	5		9	7	
			6					1

medium

SOLUTION TO 6835

8	7	1	9	6	4	5	3	2
4	6	5	2	8	3	9	1	7
2	3	9	7	5	1	6	8	4
3	9	2	6	1	7	4	5	8
5	1	6	8	4	2	7	9	3
7	4	8	5	3	9	2	6	1
6	5	7	3	2	8	1	4	9
9	8	4	1	7	6	3	2	5
1	2	3	4	9	5	8	7	6

To solve the puzzle: To solve a su-do-ku puzzle, every digit from1 to 9 must appear in each of the nine vertical columns, in each of the nine horizontal rows, and in each of the nine boxes.

SCRABBLE™

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E1 C3 S1 L1 S1 D2 A1 — Triple Word Score — RACK 1
I1 E1 S1 S1 D2 A1 E1 — Double Word Score — RACK 2
L1 B3 R1 G2 A1 A1 E1 — RACK 3
E1 E1 U1 R1 A1 Q10 M3 — 4th Letter Triple — RACK 4

PAR SCORE 190-200
by JUDD
FOUR RACK TOTAL
TIME LIMIT: 20 MIN

DIRECTIONS: Make a 2- to 7-letter word from the letters in each row. Add points of each word, using scoring directions at right. 7-letter words get 50-point bonus. "Blanks" used as any letter have no point value. All Judd's words are in the Collins English Dictionary. JUDD'S SOLUTION TOMORROW

YESTERDAY'S SOLUTION

A1 C3 U1 M3 E1 N1 — RACK 1 = 13
E1 M3 P3 T1 I1 L1 Y4 — RACK 2 = 64
D2 E1 V4 I1 L1 R1 Y4 — RACK 3 = 92
N1 U1 M3 B3 E1 R1 S1 — RACK 4 = 61
JUDD'S TOTAL 230
PAR SCORE 150-160

HITORI-3290

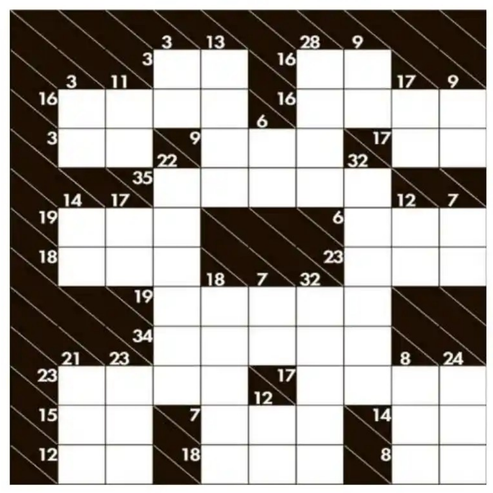
1	8	4	1	2	1	7	1
4	1	8	7	7	1	3	5
2	6	4	4	8	4	1	7
5	2	3	6	3	7	4	8
8	1	5	1	1	6	2	3
1	3	4	5	6	1	4	7
1	4	6	1	3	2	5	1
6	7	1	3	1	8	4	4

SOLUTION TO 3289

■	4	3	1	6	■	5	2
4	5	■	6	■	3	8	■
3	8	2	■	7	5	6	1
6	7	■	2	3	■	1	■
■	3	1	5	■	6	4	7
2	■	4	8	5	■	7	6
1	6	5	4	■	7	3	■
7	■	6	■	4	8	2	3

To solve the puzzle: Eliminate numbers by filling in squares so that remaining cells in that row or column do not repeat that number more than once. Filled-in cells cannot be horizontally or vertically adjacent. The un-filled cells must form a single component connected horizontally and vertically.

KAKURO- 3290



SOLUTION TO 3289

To solve the puzzle: Put a number from 1 through 9 in a cell. No zeros. A number in a cell separated by diagonal line tells the sum of numbers in consecutive cells at its right or downward. No number may appear more than once in consecutive cells.

SU DO KU X - 3834

■			4				6	■
8	■	6	1		7		■	4
		■		3		■		
		2	■		■			8
9		4	7	■	2			
		5	■		4			
		■	9		3	1		
1	■		6				■	
		9	2					■

SOLUTION TO 3833

7	2	1	5	8	9	3	6	4
8	3	4	7	6	2	1	9	5
5	9	6	4	3	1	7	2	8
3	1	7	2	4	8	9	5	6
9	5	2	6	1	7	4	8	3
6	4	8	3	9	5	2	1	7
4	7	5	9	2	6	8	3	1
1	6	9	8	7	3	5	4	2
2	8	3	1	5	4	6	7	9

To solve the puzzle: The objective is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column, each 3x3 box and each shaded diagonal line contains the same number only once.

GOVERNMENT OF KARNATAKA
PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT,
DAVANAGERE DIVISION, DAVANAGERE.

No.EE:PWD:Dvg/AE-1:IFT-46:2025-26 Dated:- 20.02.2026

SHOR TERM E-TENDER NOTIFICATION

Ref : This office tender notification No. IFT-46/2025-26 dated : 20.02.2026.

The works under Head of Account 4059~80~051~0~60~132 CMIDP, 1 work Rs. 350.00 lakhs pertaining to Davanagere sub divisions under the Jurisdiction of PWD, Davanagere division has been called for the tenders (Indent nos 31680/CALL-2) from registered Contractors in KPWD for the above works through KPP Portal as per standard tender documents rules.

Tender dates are as mentioned below: **(1)** Last Date & time for tender queries Date 20.02.2026 Timing 4.00 P.M. **(2)** Prebid meeting held : office of Executive enginner, PWD division, Davanagere. Date : 23.02.2026 Timing 11.30 A.M. **(3)** Last Date & time for receipt of tenders Date : 06.03.2026 Timing 4.00 P.M. **(4)** Date & time for opening of Technical Bid : Date : 07.03.2026 Timing 4.30 P.M.

Further details can be obtained from this office in office hours.

DIPR/CTA/KSMCA/762/2025-26

Sd/- Executive Engineer PWD, Davanagere.

Government of Karnataka
General Hospital Shikaripura, Shivamogga District.
e-mail: amoghshikaripura@gmail.com Ph: 08187-222412
No.: GHS/Development(3)/DietFood/02/2025-26
Date: 16.02.2026

e-Tender Notification

e-Tender is invited in two document submission system as per Karnataka Transparency in Public Procurement Act (KTPP)1999 Rules and 2000 regarding supply of prepared Diet Food to General Hospital Shikaripura, Shivamogga District for the year 2026-27 and interested Tenderers are requested to participate.

Sl. No. 1. Tender Notification No.: GHS/Development(3)/DietFood/02/2025-26 Date: 10.02.2026 **Details of Tender:** Regarding supply of prepared Diet Food to General Hospital Shikaripura, Shivamogga District for the year 2026-27 **Period given for submission of Tender:** From 18.02.2026 to 08.03.2026 up to 5.00 PM **Approx. Amount of Tender:** Rs. 1.00 crore **E.M.D. Details:** E.M.D. Amount of Rs. 2,00,000/- to be submitted in e-procurement

For further details contact Administrative Medical Officer, General Hospital Shikaripura, Shivamogga District during office hours or obtain from (Website: www.eproc.karnataka. gov.in)

Sd/- Administrative Medical Officer, General Hospital, Shikaripura, Shivamogga District.

DIPR/smg/ksmca/25-26/101/02/1867

Government of Karnataka
Command Area Development Authority
Cauvery Basin Project-Mysuru
O/o Executive Enngineer,
No.02 Division, CADA, CBP, Vijayanagara 1st Stage Mysuru-17
Ph.NM.: 0821-2414090 email-eecada2mysore@gmail.com

Short-Term Tender Notification No: 30/2025-26
Dated: 18.02.2026 (Call-2)

(Through KPPP Portal only)

On behalf of the Administrator, CADA, CBP, Mysore, The Executive Engineer, CADA No.2 Division, CBP, Mysuru has invited tender in Two Tender Document system for 02 Atchkat Road works in Mysore District as per Standard Tender Document KW-4 from eligible tenderers through KPPP Portal. Interested bidders may access bidding documents from **http://kppp.karnataka.gov.in** or contact this office during working hours. The tenderers can download the tender documents from 19.02.2026. The last date for Tender Queries and Clarifications (Through KPPP-Portal) is 24.02.2026 upto 4:00 PM. The last date for submission of Technical and Financial Bid is 26.02.2026 upto 4:00 PM. Date of opening of Technical Bid is 27.02.2026, onwards and Financial Bid will be opened after obtaining approval of Technical Bid from competent Authority. For more Condition & details Visit the website **http://kppp.karnataka.gov.in**

Note: If there are any corrections/ modifications, it will be published only through KPPP Portal

Sd/- Executive Engineer,No.02 Division, CADA, CBP,Mysuru

DIPR/DDMYS/1703/KSMCA/963/2025-26

CO-OP KSCCF

ಕರ್ನಾಟಕ ರಾಜ್ಯ ಸಹಕಾರ ಗ್ರಾಹಕರ ಮಹಾಮಂಡಳ ನಿಯಮಿತ
ನಂ.4, ಪಂಪಮಹಾಕವಿ ರಸ್ತೆ, ಚಾಮರಾಜಪೇಟೆ, ಬೆಂಗಳೂರು–560018.

ಕ್ರಮ ಸಂಖ್ಯೆ: ಕರಾಸಗ್ರಾಮ/ಆಡಳಿತ/2025–26/738 ದಿನಾಂಕ: 19.02.2026

ಟೆಂಡರ್ ಕಮ್ ಬಹಿರಂಗ ಹರಾಜು ಮೂಲಕ ವಾಹನ ಮಾರಾಟ

ಕರ್ನಾಟಕ ರಾಜ್ಯ ಸಹಕಾರ ಗ್ರಾಹಕರ ಮಹಾಮಂಡಳ ನಿ., ಈ ಸಂಸ್ಥೆಯ ಅಧೀನದಲ್ಲಿರುವ ಕೆ.ಎ.01 ಎಂ.ಆರ್ 3168 ನೋಂದಣಿ ಸಂಖ್ಯೆಯ 2018ನೇ ವರ್ಷದಲ್ಲಿ ಖರೀದಿಸಿರುವ ಟೊಯೋಟಾ ಇನ್ನೋವಾ SUFFIX : Z7 MT COLOUR: S WHITE ಮಾದರಿಯ ಕಾರನ್ನು ಟೆಂಡರ್ ಕಮ್ ಬಹಿರಂಗ ಹರಾಜು ಮೂಲಕ **"ಎಲ್ಲಿ ಹೇಗಿದೆಯೋ ಹಾಗೆ"** ಮಾರಾಟ ಮಾಡಲು ಉದ್ದೇಶಿಸಲಾಗಿದೆ. ಇದನ್ನು ಕೊಳ್ಳಲು ಆಸಕ್ತಿ ಹೊಂದಿರುವವರು, ಈ ಕೆಳಕಂಡ ಷರತ್ತು ಹಾಗೂ ನಿಬಂಧನೆಗಳಿಗೆ ಒಳಪಟ್ಟು ನಿಗದಿತ ಅರ್ಜಿ ಶುಲ್ಕ ಪಾವತಿಸಿ, ಟೆಂಡರ್ ಅರ್ಜಿ ಪಡೆದು ಭಾಗವಹಿಸಬಹುದಾಗಿದೆ.

ಈ ಕೆಳಗೆ ನಮೂದಿಸಲಾಗಿರುವ ದಿನಾಂಕದಂದು ವಾಹನವನ್ನು ಮೇಲ್ಕಂಡ ವಿಳಾಸದ ಆವರಣದಲ್ಲಿ ಮಾರಾಟ ಮಾಡಲಾಗುವುದು.

(1) ವಾಹನ ಖರೀದಿಗಾಗಿ ಮೊಹರು ಮಾಡಿರುವ ಟೆಂಡರ್ ಲಕೋಟೆಯನ್ನು ದಿನಾಂಕ: **25.02.2026 ರಂದು ಸಂಜೆ 5:30 ಗಂಟೆ ಒಳಗಾಗಿ** ಸಲ್ಲಿಸಿ ಸ್ವೀಕೃತಿ ಪಡೆಯುವುದು. (2) **ದಿನಾಂಕ:26.02.2026 ರಂದು ಸಂಜೆ 4:00 ಗಂಟೆಗೆ** ಮೊಹರು ಮಾಡಿದ ಟೆಂಡರ್ ಲಕೋಟೆಗಳನ್ನು ತೆರೆಯಲಾಗುವುದು. ನಂತರ ಬಹಿರಂಗ ಹರಾಜು ಪ್ರಕ್ರಿಯೆ ಮಾಡಲಾಗುವುದು. (3) ಟೆಂಡರ್ ಅರ್ಜಿಗಳನ್ನು ಕರ್ನಾಟಕ ರಾಜ್ಯ ಸಹಕಾರ ಗ್ರಾಹಕರ ಮಹಾಮಂಡಳ (ನಿ), (ಮೇಲೆ ತಿಳಿಸಿರುವ ವಿಳಾಸದ) ಕಛೇರಿಯಲ್ಲಿ **ದಿನಾಂಕ 20.02.2026 ರಿಂದ 25.02.2026 ರ ಅಪರಾಹ್ನ 4:00 ಗಂಟೆ ಒಳಗಾಗಿ** ಕಛೇರಿ ವೇಳೆಯಲ್ಲಿ ಅರ್ಜಿ ಶುಲ್ಕ **ರೂ. 500.00 ಗಳನ್ನು** ನಗದು ಮೂಲಕ ಪಾವತಿಸಿ ಟೆಂಡರ್ ಅರ್ಜಿ ಫಾರಂಗಳನ್ನು ಪಡೆಯಬಹುದು. (4) ಅರ್ಜಿಯ ಶುಲ್ಕ **ರೂ. 500.00** ಆಗಿದ್ದು, ಅದನ್ನು ಹಿಂದಿರುಗಿಸಲಾಗುವುದಿಲ್ಲ. (5) ವಾಹನ ಖರೀದಿಗಾಗಿ ಮೊಹರು ಮಾಡಿದ ಟೆಂಡರ್ ಲಕೋಟೆಗಳನ್ನು ಸಲ್ಲಿಸಿರುವವರು ಮಾತ್ರ ಬಹಿರಂಗ ಹರಾಜಿನಲ್ಲಿ ಭಾಗವಹಿಸಲು ಅವಕಾಶವಿರುತ್ತದೆ. (6) ಟೆಂಡರ್ ಫಾರಂ ಅರ್ಜಿಗಳ ಜೊತೆಗೆ ಇ.ಎಂ.ಡಿ ಮೊತ್ತವಾಗಿ (E.M.D) **ರೂ. 20,000.00** (ರೂ. ಇಪ್ಪತ್ತು ಸಾವಿರ ಮಾತ್ರ) ನಗದು / ಡಿಮ್ಯಾಂಡ್ ಡ್ರಾಫ್ಟ್ ಮೂಲಕ ಸಲ್ಲಿಸುವುದು. (7) ಟೆಂಡರ್ ಕಮ್ ಬಹಿರಂಗ ಹರಾಜು ಪ್ರಕ್ರಿಯೆಯನ್ನು ಯಾವುದೇ ಕಾರಣ ನೀಡದೇ ಮುಂದೂಡುವ/ರದ್ದುಪಡಿಸುವ ಅಧಿಕಾರವನ್ನು ಸಂಸ್ಥೆಯ ವ್ಯವಸ್ಥಾಪಕ ನಿರ್ದೇಶಕರು ಹೊಂದಿರುತ್ತಾರೆ. (8) ವಾಹನ ನೋಂದಣಿ ಶುಲ್ಕ, ಇತರೆ ಶುಲ್ಕಗಳು ಮತ್ತು ಜಿ.ಎಸ್.ಟಿ ಅನ್ನು ಯಶಸ್ವಿ ಬಿಡ್‌ದಾರರೇ ಭರಿಸತಕ್ಕದ್ದು. (9) ಯಶಸ್ವಿ ಬಿಡ್‌ದಾರರೊಡನೆ ದರ ಸಂಧಾನ ನಡೆಸಿ ವಿಲೇವಾರಿ ಮಾಡುವ ಅಧಿಕಾರವನ್ನು ಸಂಸ್ಥೆಯ ವ್ಯವಸ್ಥಾಪಕ ನಿರ್ದೇಶಕರು ಹೊಂದಿರುತ್ತಾರೆ. (10) ಯಶಸ್ವಿ ಬಿಡ್‌ದಾರರು ಹರಾಜು ದಿನಾಂಕದಂದು ಕೂಡಲೇ ಪೂರ್ಣ ಮೊತ್ತವನ್ನು ಪಾವತಿಸಿ ವಾಹನವನ್ನು ಪಡೆಯುವುದು. ತಪ್ಪಿದ್ದಲ್ಲಿ, ಇ.ಎಂ.ಡಿ ಮೊತ್ತವನ್ನು ಮುಟ್ಟುಗೋಲು ಹಾಕಿಕೊಂಡು 2ನೇ ಬಿಡ್ದುದಾರರೊಂದಿಗೆ ದರ ಸಂಧಾನ ಮಾಡಿ ವಾಹನ ವಿಲೇವಾರಿ ಮಾಡುವ ಅಧಿಕಾರವನ್ನು ಸಂಸ್ಥೆಯ ವ್ಯವಸ್ಥಾಪಕ ನಿರ್ದೇಶಕರು ಹೊಂದಿರುತ್ತಾರೆ.

ಸಹಿ/–
ವ್ಯವಸ್ಥಾಪಕ ನಿರ್ದೇಶಕರು

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DEPARTMENT OF TECHNICAL EDUCATION
Palace Road, Bangalore-560001, Phone: 22204928.

No.DTE-PLANOBLD/1/2026 Date: 18-02-2026

E-TENDER NOTIFICATION

The Commissioner for Collegiate and Technical Education, Bangalore, hereby invites bids through the KPP Portal under a two-cover system from eligible bidders for providing housekeeping (with materials) and maintenance services for the Department of Technical Education building and its premises at Palace Road, Bengaluru. Detailed tender documents containing the terms and conditions may be obtained from the website **https://kppp. karnataka.gov.in.**

Tender Schedules are as below

Item Name	Date of floating tender in KPP Portal	Date and time of pre-bid meeting	Last date and time for bidding through KPP Portal
Tender No.DTE/2025-26/SE0004, Housingkeeping (with materials) & Maintenance Service	18.02.2026	24.02.2026 at 12:00 Noon	05.03.2026 at 5:29 p.m.

The Department reserves the right to cancel or reject the tenders without any notification. Details in this regard may be obtained in the website **https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in.**

Sd/- Additional Director (Polytechnic)
Department of Technical Education

DIPR/CP/RO5775/AAPL/2025-26

ಹಿಂದೂ ಧಾರ್ಮಿಕ ಸಂಸ್ಥೆಗಳು ಹಾಗೂ ಧರ್ಮಾದಾಯ ದತ್ತಿಗಳ ಇಲಾಖೆ
ಕಾರ್ಯನಿರ್ವಾಹಕ ಅಧಿಕಾರಿಗಳ ಕಛೇರಿ
ಶ್ರೀ ವಸಂತವಲ್ಲಭರಾಯ ಸ್ವಾಮಿ ಮತ್ತು ಸಮೂಹ ದೇವಾಲಯಗಳು
ವಸಂತಪುರ ಗ್ರಾಮ, ಉತ್ತರಹಳ್ಳಿ ಹೋಬಳಿ, ಬೆಂಗಳೂರು ದಕ್ಷಿಣ ತಾಲ್ಲೂಕು, ಬೆಂಗಳೂರು.
Ph.No.: 080-26663874, **e-mail:** vvrs.groupoftemples@gmail.com

ಸಂ: ಶ್ರೀ.ನಾ.ದೇ.ಸಿಆರ್/30/2020–21 ದಿನಾಂಕ: 20.02.2026

ನೇಮಕಾತಿ ಪ್ರಕಟಣೆ

ಬೆಂಗಳೂರು ನಗರ ಬೇಗೂರು ಶ್ರೀ ನಾಗೇಶ್ವರ ಸ್ವಾಮಿ ದೇವಾಲಯಕ್ಕೆ ಅನುಮೋದನೆಯಾಗಿರುವ ಸಿಬ್ಬಂದಿ ಮಾದರಿಯನ್ವಯ ಖಾಲಿ ಇರುವ ಗ್ರೂಪ್ 'ಸಿ' ಮತ್ತು 'ಡಿ' ವರ್ಗದ 06 ದೇವಾಲಯದ ಹುದ್ದೆಗಳ ಆಯ್ಕೆ/ನೇಮಕಾತಿ ಅರ್ಜಿ ಆಹ್ವಾನಿಸಿ ದಿನಾಂಕ: **30.01.2026ರಂದು** ಪ್ರಕಟಣೆಯನ್ನು ಹೊರಡಿಸಲಾಗಿದ್ದು, ಅರ್ಜಿಯನ್ನು ಪಡೆಯಲು ಮತ್ತು ಸಲ್ಲಿಸಲು ಕಡೆಯ ದಿನಾಂಕ: **21.02.2026ಕ್ಕೆ** ನಿಗಧಿಪಡಿಸಲಾಗಿತ್ತು. ಪ್ರಸ್ತುತ ಅಭ್ಯರ್ಥಿಗಳು ಸ್ಥಳೀಯ ಪೋಲೀಸ್ ಠಾಣೆಯಿಂದ ಇತ್ತೀಚಿನ ವ್ಯಕ್ತಿತ್ವ ಪ್ರಮಾಣ ಪತ್ರ (Character Certificate) ಸಿದ್ಧಪಡಿಸಿ ಸಲ್ಲಿಸಲು ಹೆಚ್ಚಿನ ಸಮಯ ನೀಡುವ ಉದ್ದೇಶದಿಂದ ಅರ್ಜಿ ಸಲ್ಲಿಸುವ ಅಂತಿಮ ದಿನಾಂಕವನ್ನು **09.03.2026 ಸಂಜೆ 5.00 ಗಂಟೆ ವರೆಗೆ** ವಿಸ್ತರಿಸಲಾಗಿದೆ.

ಸೂಚನೆಗಳು:

- ಅರ್ಹ ಅಭ್ಯರ್ಥಿಗಳು ದಿನಾಂಕ:03.01.2026ರ ಪ್ರಕಟಣೆಯಲ್ಲಿ ನೀಡಿರುವ ಷರತ್ತುಗಳಿಗೆ ಒಳಪಟ್ಟು ಅರ್ಜಿ ಸಲ್ಲಿಸಬೇಕು.
- ಅರ್ಜಿಯನ್ನು ಕೇವಲ ದೇವಸ್ಥಾನದ ಕಛೇರಿಯಲ್ಲಿ ಮಾತ್ರ ಸಲ್ಲಿಸಬೇಕು.
- ಗಡುವು ದಿನಾಂಕದ ನಂತರ ಬಂದ ಅರ್ಜಿಗಳನ್ನು ಪರಿಗಣಿಸುವುದಿಲ್ಲ.
- ಹೆಚ್ಚಿನ ಮಾಹಿತಿಗಾಗಿ ದೇವಾಲಯದ ಕಛೇರಿ ಸಮಯದಲ್ಲಿ ಸಂಪರ್ಕಿಸಬಹುದು.

ಸಹಿ/– **ಕಾರ್ಯನಿರ್ವಾಹಕ ಅಧಿಕಾರಿಗಳು**
ಶ್ರೀ ವಸಂತ ವಲ್ಲಭರಾಯಸ್ವಾಮಿ ಮತ್ತು ಸಮೂಹ ದೇವಾಲಯಗಳು
ವಸಂತಪುರ, ಬೆಂಗಳೂರು.

DIPR/CP/5774/SA/2025-26

ZILLA PANCHAYATH, TUMKUR
RURAL DRINKING WATER AND SANITATION DIVISION TUMKUR

Short term tender notification

NO. 22/EE/RDWS&SD/TMK/MVSO&M/AE-2/3594/ 2025-26 Date: 16-02-2026

On behalf of the Governor of Karnataka Executive Engineer, Rural Drinking Water Supply & Sanitation Division Tumkur has Invites request for proposal tenders from the eligible bidders for the Two Cover work detailed in the table below. Tender procedure as per rule 28 of the KTPP act shall be followed. The tenders are Required submit through Karnataka Public Procurement mode through portal. **(https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in/)** from Class-III & above PWD Registered Contractors who have got adequate financial resources & sufficient past experience for the following MVS O&M Works of Gubbi Taluk 3 Works, Koratagere - 1 Work, and Tumkur Taluk 4 Works of Tumkur Dist. As per the schedule given below. (Minimum Tender Amount **Rs. 65.56 Lakhs** EMD Amount **Rs. 1,31,200/-** and Maximum Tender Amount **Rs. 156.20 Lakhs** EMD Amount **Rs. 2,34,300/-**)

Sl. No	Particulars	Details
1	Last date of submit bids on Karnataka Public Procurement portal	**06-03-2026 Upto 5.00 PM**
2	Pre Bid Meeting	**Date: 27-02-2026 at 11.00 A M Venue, Executive Engineer, Rural Drinking water & Sanitation Division Tumkur**
3	Technical Opening of Bids	**07-03-2026 at 5.30 PM onwards**
4	Financial Opening of Bids	**10-03-2026 at 11.00 A M onwards**

For further particulars/details may avail from the office of the undersigned during office hours on all working days and may visit the website **(https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in/)**

Sd/- (SRI K.M. Kumaraswamy)
Executive Engineer
RDW&S, Divison, TUMKUR

DIPR/TUM/RO-276/25-26/Oysters

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Bengaluru West City Corporation
Office of the Executive Engineer, Malleshwaram Division, 2nd Cross, Jaladarshini Layout, M.S.R. Nagara, Mathikere, Bengaluru-560054.

No. EE/(MLM)/KPPP/14/2025-26 Date: 19.02.2026

TENDER CORRIGENDUM NOTICE-2

Sub: This Office kppp.karnataka.gov.in Portal Notice No.EE/MLM/KPPP/14/2025-26 Corrigendum Notice.

With reference to the above subject and tender notification No.EE/MLM/KPPP/14/2025-26, Dated: 28.01.2026. Tender as been called and there are changes in the tender as per below.

Revised Time Schedule: (1) Last Date & Time for uploading of tender in KPP Portal: **04.03.2026 upto 5:00 p.m. (2)** Date and Time of opening of tenders: Technical Bid and Technical Evaluation: **05.03.2026 at 5:30 p.m.**

The other terms and essential conditions remain the same.

Sd/- Executive Engineer, Malleshwaram Divison, Zone-2, BWCC.

KARNATAKA HOUSING BOARD
3rd Floor, Cauvery Bhavan, K.G. Road, Bengaluru - 560009.

TENDER NOTIFICATION
(Through Karnataka Public Procurement Portal only)

Karnataka Housing Board invite tender from the eligible Pre qualified contractors & willing to Pre qualify in Karnataka Housing Board through Karnataka public procurement portal for the below mentioned work

Name of the work : Jungle clearance and other development works to KHB Layout at Chikkamandya, Mandya District. **Work Indent :** KHB/2025-26/OW/Work_Indent 715 & IFT No.158/2025-26 Date: 20.02.2026. **Amount put to tender :** Rs.1,71,94,978/-

Last date for submission of bid: 07.03.2026 upto 4.00 PM

For further information, contact below mentioned office address: Executive Engineer, Karnataka Housing Board, Cauvery Bhavan, Bengaluru. Telephone No: 080-22273511/080-22100077, Website: **https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in**

DIPR/CP/5795/AKAR/2025-26

Sd/- Executive Engineer, Karnataka Housing Board, Bengaluru

KARNATAKA POWER TRANSMISSION CORPORATION LIMITED
(CIN : U40109KA1999SGC025521)

No.CEE/Tr(O)Z/Mys/SEE(O)/AEE-3/25-26/9699-701 Date: 19.02.2026

TENDER NOTIFICATION
(THROUGH KARNATAKA PUBLIC PROCUREMENT PORTAL MODE ONLY)

KPTCL invites tenders against **Bid Enquiry No:** CEE/KPTCL/TZM/SEE(O)/AEE-3/2025-26/873 Dated: 18.02.2026 for Providing 1No's of additional 11kV MCVCB breaker for bifurcation of overloaded feeder at 220/66/11kV Receiving Station, **Madhuvanahalli** coming under Chamrajanagara Operations Division, Mysuru on PTK basis - **on Percentage Rate tendering basis**

The details regarding participation in the e-tendering process can be obtained by logging on to KPTCL website: **https://kptcl.karnataka.gov.in** on hyperlink 'E Procurement KPTCL' or **https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in on or after 23.02.2026.** Any other details can be had from the office of the undersigned during office hours.

Sd/- Chief Engineer (Elec.),
Transmission (Operations) Zone, KPTCL, Prasarana Bhavana, FTS Compound, NR Mohalla, Mysuru - 570007

PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT
Office of the Executive Engineer, PWD Bangalore Division, 2nd Floor, PWD Annexure Building, K.R. Circle, Bengaluru-01.
Phone: 080-22133370

No. 58/2025-26 Date: 19.02.2026

SHORT-TERM TENDER NOTIFICATION

Item-rate tenders, for the work in PWD **Nelamagala** Sub Divisions under this office noted below, are invited by the undersigned on behalf of the Governor of Karnataka in accordance with Karnataka Transparency in Public Procurement rules 2000 and as per Standard Tender Documents for procurement of works from the contractors registered in K.P.W.D. as per KPPP. Tender Notification are Published **for 01 work (Rs. 185.00 Lakhs)** Details of the tender works can be obtained from the above Office during office hours on working days. **EMD & Tender processing fees are mentioned in KPP portal. (1)** Tenders must be submitted online through KPP portal on or before **4.00 PM on Dated: 26.02.2026. (2)** The opening of tenders through KPP portal on **Dated: 27.02.2026 at 4.30 PM** or further date and time will be Intimated. **For more details contact this office.**

Sd/- Executive Engineer.

DIPR/DD-C.P/5768/KSMCA/2025-26

NWKRTC, Hubli-Dharwad City Transport Division, Hubli.

No.NWKT/HDCTD/TR/COMM/1804 **Date :18-02-2026**

E-Tender 01/2026 & Negotiation Notification No. 01/2026

N.W.K.R.T.C. Hubballi-Dharwad City Transport Division invited applications for the selection of Licencees through E-Tender & Negotiation for the commercial stalls, cleaning contract of tolilet/urinas & cleaning contract of bus stand area in **bus stands of City & Suburban Bus stand Hubballi, C.B.T.-Hubballi, C.B.T.-Dharwad, Hebballi & Mishrikoti from 18-02-2026** The tender details & dates are as follows.

E-procurement Details	Fixed Dates	Negotiation Details	Fixed Dates
E-Tender doucuments can be downloaded from https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in	**13-03-2026 up to 17:00**	Last date of sale of Negotiation application forms	**12-03-2026 up to 12:00**
Last date for online bid submission	**13-03-2026 up to 17:00**	Last date for Submission of filled forms with documents & D.D. of E.M.D.	**13-03-2026 up to 12:00**
E-Tender open date (if no technical errors)	**16-03-2026 at 12:30**	Negotiation Date	**13-03-2026 at 12:30**

Only certified DSC **(Digital Signature Certificate)** key holders can apply for E-Tender. For more details applicants may contact the **NWKRTC's Hubballi-Dharwad City Transport Division Office, 5th Floor, C.B.T.-Hubli Bus Stand, C.B.T.-Hubballi. Mobile number 9606030542 (Divisional Traffic Officer)**

Sd/- Divisional Controller
NWKRTC: H-D City Transport Division

DIPR/Dharwad1259/Manipal/2025-26

(Govt of Karnataka)
EXECUTIVE ENGINEER P.W.D DIVISION SEDAM

No. EE/PWD/Dvn/Sed/TS-2/2025-26/3186 Date : 18-02-2026

-:: SHORT TERM TENDER NOTIFICATION ::-

1) Details of Works : 1. Total no of works 04 in **Sedam Taluka** Indent No's are : 33021, 32859, 33191 (S.C) & 33028 (CAT-II(A)). 2. Total no of works 12 in **Chittapur Taluka** Indent No's are : 32613 (S.C), 32615 (CAT-II(A)), 32619 (CAT-II(A)), 32623 (S.T), 31953 (CAT-II(A)), 31947 (S.C), 31957 (S.T), 31955 (CAT-I), 32612 (S.C), 32790, 32818, & 11245, 3. Total no of works 03 in **Chincholi Taluka** Indent No's are : 32443, 32676, & 32454 (S.T). 2) Head of Account: Under 2025-26 KKRDB, 2018-19 Pragati Colony/Colony Dovelopment 2025-26 5054 & 2023-24 8443 Works, 3) Amount Put to Tender: **Lowest Estimate Cost Rs. 18.00 Lakhs, Highest Estimate Cost Rs. 324.16 Lakhs,** 4) Eligibility of Contractor: Class-IV contractor & Above, 5) Pre Bid Meeting: **25-02-2026 – 11.00 Hrs,** 6) Date & time for Tender Queries of tenders : **27-02-2026 - 17:30 Hrs**, 7) Tender Form Fee & EMD Amount: Tender processing fee & EMD As per e-portal, 8) Last date & time for receipt of tenders: **02-03-2026 - 16:00 Hrs,** 9) Date & Time for Opening of Technical Bid: **03-03-2026 - 16:30 Hrs,** 10) Date & Time for opening of Financial Bid: **05-03-2026 - 16:30 Hrs,** 11) Communication Address: Office of the Executive Engineer, P.W.D Division Sedam, 12) Internet Address: www.kppp.karnataka.gov.in, 13) If any changes for Cancelation : Any Changes and cancelations are done in www.kppp.karnataka.gov.in

Note: 1) The undersigned has to power to postponement/rejecting the tenders, 2) If any changes are there in upcoming days These Tenders are not published in tender bulletin it should be read in https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in Portal

DIPR/Kalaburagi/1102/KSMC&A/2025-26

Sd/- Executive Engineer, P.W.D Division Sedam

Japan PM warns of China 'coercion', vows security overhaul

Says Beijing intensifying attempts to change status quo in East China Sea, South China Sea

TOKYO, AFP

Japan's Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi delivers her policy speech in the parliament, in Tokyo, Japan, on Friday. REUTERS

China is stepping up attempts to change the status quo "by force or coercion", Japanese Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi said Friday, while adding she wanted "stable and constructive" ties with Beijing.

"China is intensifying its attempts to unilaterally change the status quo by force or coercion in the East China Sea and the South China Sea, while also expanding and stepping up its military activities in the areas surrounding our country," Takaichi told parliament following her election landslide on February 8.

"It is a consistent policy of the Takaichi Cabinet to comprehensively advance a 'Mutually Beneficial Relationship Based on Common Strategic Interests' with China and to build a constructive and stable relationship. "Precisely because China is an important neighbour and there are various pending issues and challenges, we will continue our communication and respond calmly and appropriately from the standpoint of our national interest," she said.

China is beefing up its military and is engaged in a number of territorial disputes with other countries in the region, including Japan over the Senkaku Islands, known as the Diaoyu in China.

Takaichi, seen as a China hawk before becoming premier in October, suggested in November that Japan could intervene militarily if Beijing sought to take Taiwan by force.

China, which regards the democratic island as part of its territory and has not ruled out force to annex it, was furious.

It summoned Tokyo's ambassador and warned Chinese citizens against visiting Japan. The number of tourists from mainland China plunged 60.7 percent last month.

In December, J-15 jets from China's Liaoning aircraft carrier twice locked radar on Japanese aircraft in international waters near Okinawa, according to Japan.

Trump says he's considering limited strike on Iran

Tehran to submit nuclear deal draft to US within days

WASHINGTON, AP

Donald Trump

President Donald Trump warned on Friday that limited strikes against Iran are possible even as the country's top diplomat said Tehran expects to have a proposed deal ready in the next few days following nuclear talks with the United States.

In response to a reporter's question on whether the US could take limited military action as the countries negotiate, Trump said, "I guess I can say I am considering that." Earlier, Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi said in a TV interview that his country was planning to finalise a draft deal in "the next two to three days" to then send to Washington.

"I don't think it takes long, perhaps, in a matter of a week or so, we can start real, serious negotiations on the text and come to a conclusion," Araghchi said on MSNOW's "Morning Joe" show.

The tensions between the longtime adversaries have ramped up as the Trump administration pushes for concessions from Iran and has built up the largest US military presence in the Middle East in decades, with more warships and aircraft on the way. Both countries have signalled that they are prepared for war if talks on Tehran's nuclear programme fizzle out.

"We are prepared for war, and we are prepared for peace," Araghchi said Friday.

Trump said a day earlier that he believes 10 to 15 days is "enough time" for Iran to reach a deal following recent rounds of indirect negotiations, including this week in Geneva, that made little visible progress. But the talks have been deadlocked for years, and Iran has refused to discuss wider US and Israeli demands that it scale back its missile program.

Araghchi also said that his American counterparts have not asked for zero enrichment of uranium as part of the latest round of talks, which is in contradiction to what US officials have said.

Kyiv says halted Russian plan to kill top officials

KYIV, AFP: Kyiv said Friday that 10 people were arrested in Ukraine and Moldova on suspicion of planning to assassinate senior Ukrainian political figures on Moscow's orders, with payouts of up to $100,000.

Kyiv has previously accused Russia, which invaded Ukraine four years ago, of plotting to kill several senior officials, including President Volodymyr Zelensky and the head of Ukraine's intelligence service.

"As part of the work of a joint investigative team of Ukrainian and Moldovan law enforcement officers, an organised group has been exposed that was preparing contract killings of well-known Ukrainian citizens and foreigners," Ukrainian Prosecutor General Ruslan Kravchenko said. Kravchenko said law enforcement had carried out 20 searches across the country and confiscated money, weapons, explosives and communications with Russian handlers.

Seven people were held in Ukraine during the raids and three more -- including the organiser of the campaign -- were apprehended in Moldova, the statement said.

Moldova confirmed the joint investigation in an earlier statement into a plot aiming at the "physical liquidation of several public figures in Ukraine.

WORLD AT A GLANCE

Director Anna Fitch holds a puppet as she poses during a photocall to promote the movie 'YO (Love is a Rebellious Bird' at the 76th Berlinale International Film Festival in Germany on Friday. REUTERS

Eric Dane, star of 'Grey's Anatomy' and 'Euphoria', dies at 53

Eric Dane

Actor Eric Dane, who played the handsome Dr Mark Sloan on the hit television series "Grey's Anatomy," died on Thursday aged 53, his family said, less than a year after revealing that he suffered from amyotrophic lateral sclerosis, or ALS, reports Reuters.

For 15 years, Dane played a plastic surgeon nicknamed "McSteamy" by female characters in the show. He also starred in the series "Euphoria," and said after the diagnosis he would still return to the set for its third season. "Eric Dane passed on Thursday afternoon following a courageous battle with ALS," his family said in a statement, according to People magazine and other media.

"He spent his final days surrounded by dear friends, his devoted wife, and his two beautiful daughters, Billie and Georgia, who were the center of his world."

ALS is a progressive disease in which a person's brain loses connection with the muscles. It is also known as Lou Gehrig's disease after the Hall of Fame baseball player who died from it in 1941 at age 37.

"Throughout his journey with ALS, Eric became a passionate advocate for awareness and research, determined to make a difference for others facing the same fight," Dane's family added.

US to release files on UFOs, aliens

US President Donald Trump said Thursday that he's directing the Pentagon and other government agencies to identify and release files related to extraterrestrials and UFOs because of "tremendous interest", reports AP from Washington

Trump made the announcement in a social media post hours after he accused former President Barack Obama of disclosing "classified information" when Obama recently suggested in a podcast interview that aliens were real.

Trump told reporters aboard Air Force One, "I don't know if they're real or not," and said of Obama, "I may get him out of trouble by declassifying."

Trump said he was directing government agencies to release files related "to alien and extraterrestrial life, unidentified aerial phenomena (UAP), and unidentified flying objects (UFOs), and any and all other information connected to these highly complex, but extremely interesting and important, matters."

US Chamber flags possible refunds on India tariffs after top court ruling

NEW YORK/WASHINGTON, PTI

A leading US business chamber on Friday said refunds would be available for some levies applied to goods from Brazil and India after the Supreme Court struck down President Donald Trump's sweeping tariffs.

In a 6-3 vote, the judges found that the International Emergency Economic Powers Act (IEEPA) does not authorise the imposition of duties. Justices Clarence Thomas, Samuel A Alito Jr. and Brett Kavanaugh dissented in the court's decision.

The US Chamber of Commerce welcomed the Supreme Court's decision to strike down Trump's sweeping tariffs, calling on the administration to use this opportunity to reset the overall tariff policy to lower costs for families.

Executive Vice President and Chief Policy Officer at the US Chamber of Commerce Neil Bradley said the Supreme Court's decision is "welcome news" for businesses and consumers.

"Over the past year, the Chamber has been working with small and midsize businesses around the country that have seen significant cost increases and supply chain disruptions as a result of these tariffs," Bradley said in a statement.

"Swift refunds of the impermissible tariffs will be meaningful for the more than 200,000 small business importers in this country and will help support stronger economic growth this year," he added.

It noted that the Court's decision has "opened the door" for many US small businesses to seek refunds, but added that determining whether a business qualifies for the refund -and understanding what steps to take next-can be challenging.

US importers of record who directly paid the tariffs or the person who takes ownership of the goods once they have cleared customs (the "consignee") may be eligible for a refund, it said in an FAQ about who could be eligible for the tariff refunds.

"Businesses that did not directly pay the tariffs are not eligible for a refund. Refunds are only available for tariffs applied under the International Economic Emergency Powers Act (IEEPA). This includes tariffs commonly known as "fentanyl," "trafficking," "reciprocal," or "baseline" tariffs, as well as some other tariffs applied to goods from Brazil and India," it said.

Trump had imposed 25 per cent reciprocal tariffs on India and an additional 25 per cent punitive tariff for Delhi's purchases of Russian oil.

While he slashed the reciprocal tariffs to 18 per cent, the 25 per cent levies imposed for Russian oil purchases were removed, with Trump noting the commitment by India to stop directly or indirectly importing energy from Moscow and purchasing American energy products.

No charity to banned groups, including JeM, LeT and JuD: Pak's Punjab govt

LAHORE, PTI

Pakistan's Punjab government on Friday notified that those giving charity to some 90 banned organisations, including Masood Azhar's Jaish-e-Mohammad (JeM) and Hafiz Saeed's Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) and Jamaat-ud-Dawa (JuD), will be booked under terrorism charges.

According to the Punjab Home Department notification, providing any form of assistance to the proscribed organisations is a criminal offence.

"Citizens are strongly advised not to give zakat (charity) or donations to unregistered or proscribed organisations or face legal action," it says.

Muslims give zakat usually during the month of Ramadan.

The department has made it clear that anyone found providing financial support to banned groups involved in terrorism or anti-state activities will face legal action under the Anti-Terrorism Act, 1997.

Citizens should ensure that their zakat, charity, and donations are given only to institutions registered with the Punjab Charity Commission, it says.

It urges the public to ensure that their donations reach deserving beneficiaries rather than terrorists.

The fresh list of banned groups released by the Punjab Home Department on Friday includes JeM, LeT, JuD, Lashkar-e-Jhangvi, Al-Furqan Trust Karachi, Sipah-e-Sahaba Pakistan, Tehreek-e-Jafaria Pakistan, Al-Qaeda, Hizb-ut-Tahrir, Balochistan Liberation Army, Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan, ISIS, Jamaat-ul-Ahrar, Jundallah, Falah-e-Insaniat Foundation, Sindhudesh Liberation Army and Tehreek-e-Labbaik Pakistan.

DH Classifieds

JOB OPPORTUNITIES

General

CHANGE OF NAME
I, CHANDRA BHUSHAN S/o. Late Punya Dev Choudhary R/a Flat #B-404, Concorde Southscape, Andapura, near Gold Coins Club, Electronic City Phase-2, Bangalore, have changed my Name to CHANDRA BHUSHAN CHOUDHARY vide affidavit date: 16.02.2026 before Notary B.M. Chandrashekar, Bangalore.

NATIONAL BANK FOR AGRICULTURE AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT
Engagement of Bank's Medical Officer on Contract basis

NABARD, an All India Apex Organization wholly owned by Government of India, invites applications from Indian citizens having necessary qualification for appointment in NABARD for the following post at:
1) NABARD Karnataka Regional Office, 46, Kempe Gowda Road, Bengaluru - 560009
2) NABARD Officers Quarters, Raheja Park Apartments, Magadi Main Road, Agrahara Dasarahalli, Vijaynagar- 560079
3) NABARD Officers Quarters, Nandini Layout, Bengaluru-560096

Sl. No	Post	No.	Last Date of Application
1	Bank's Medical Officer – (On Contract basis) at NABARD Karnataka Regional Office, 46, Kempe Gowda Road, Bengaluru - 560009	01	15 March 2026
2	Bank's Medical Officer – (On Contract basis) at NABARD Officers Quarters, Raheja Park Apartments, Magadi Main Road, Agrahara Dasarahalli, Vijaynagar - 560079 and NABARD Officers Quarters, Nandini Layout, Bengaluru - 560096	01	15 March 2026
	Total	02	

For all details related to educational qualification, age, minimum qualifying experience, selection procedure etc., please visit www.nabard.org.

(Dr. Surendra Babu)
Chief General Manager
Karnataka RO, Bengaluru

Teachers/ Professors

TEACHERS WANTED SFS SCHOOL (CBSE), MALUR (Near Hosakote, Bengaluru; run by MSFS Fathers) We are seeking qualified TGTs and PRTs for English, Mathematics, Science, Hindi, Computer Science, and Social Science across secondary, upper primary, and lower primary levels. Montessori-trained/ NTTC teachers for kindergarten, as well as PT, music, work experience,dance, and art teachers, are also required.Fluency in English is mandatory for all positions.Free boarding and lodging OR complimentary transport from Electronic City is available, along with an attractive salary. Please apply with your biodata and a photograph within seven days to: sfsschoolmalur24@gmail.com

Multiple Vacancy

WANTED 1. ETP Operator 2. Accountant Both With Experience. Contact Number: 9916503814

PERSONAL

Change of Name

CHANGE OF NAME
I,Prathika Naveen Cariappa R/at No.33/4,Thyagaraja Layout, Jai Bharath Nagar, Maruthi Sevanagar, Bengaluru-560033, declare that my name is wrongly mentioned in some documents as Prathika Naveen. I state that my correct name is PRATHIKA NAVEEN CARIAPPA vide affidavit dated 20-02-2026 before notary Y.R. Chandrasekar, Bengaluru.

WE, R.RISHAB and PAVITHRA.R.A. R/o.Flat#401 Parasmani Blossom 3rd Main,3rd`Cross Chamarajpet Bengaluru 560018 have`changed our_Minor Daughter's Name from RUTHVEE_JAIN to RIYA_JAIIN DOB:21.11.2014 vide`affidavit dated:19.2.2026 before`Notary Mamatha.N.K. Bangalore.

WE, R.RISHAB and PAVITHRA.R.A. R/o.Flat#401 Parasmani Blossom, 3rd Main,3rd Cross Chamarajpet Bengaluru 560018 have`changed our_Minor Daughter's Name`from MISHRI_JAIN to MISSHRE_JAIIN DOB:21.05.2021 vide`affidavit dated:19.2.2026 before`Notary Mamatha.N.K. Bangalore.

BANGALORE DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY
T. Chowdaiah Road, Kumara Park West, Bengaluru - 560 020

No.: BDA/DCF/KRIDE-BSRP/e-Tender/CR/08/2025-26 Date: 19.02.2026

e-Procurement Portal Short-Term Tender Notice

It is hereby informed to the public that Tender is invited in Karnataka Public Procurement Portal of GoK https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in from eligible Forest Contractors registered for the year 2025-26 in various Forest Divisions of Karnataka Forest Department for implementation of Relief Afforestation works like Monsoon Plantation mentioned in the Schedule below related to KRIDE-BSRP Project for the year 2026-27 in Nadaprabhu Kempegowda Layout in the Jurisdiction of Banagalore Development Authority.

Tender Schedule

Sl. No.	Details		Date
1	Issue of Tender Notice		19.02.2026
2	Last date for submission of objections regarding the Tender		23.02.2026 up to 4.00 PM
3	Date of Pre-Bid Meeting		24.02.2026 From 10.00 AM to 11.00 AM
4	Last date for submission of Tender		05.03.2026 up to 4.00 PM
5	Opening of Tender	Technical Bid	06.03.2026 at 4.00 PM
		Financial Bid	After Scrutiny of Technical Bid
6	In case of the Tender process not happening/Bid not received, Last date and time for submission of Tender of 2nd call		11.03.2026 up to 4.00 PM
7	Opening of Tender	Technical Bid	12.03.2026 at 4.00 PM
		Financial Bid	After Scrutiny of Technical Bid
8	In case no Tenderers participate in the first and second e-Tender, Last date and time for submission of Tender of 3rd call		18.03.2026 up to 4.00 PM

Related to the 2nd and 3rd call of Tender, separate Tender Notice will not be published

Those interested in the works of the Tender Notice can participate in the Tender after obtaining the necessary details during office hours and through e-procurement portal of GoK (https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in).

Special Note: If any clarification regarding the Tender is required, read the Tender Notice uploaded in (https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in).

Sd/- Assistant Conservator of Forests

No. A-34015/4/2021-Estt
NATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION
Dated, the 20th February, 2026

Deputation Vacancy Notice No. 02/2026

Applications are invited for filling up the following anticipated vacancy in the National Human Rights Commission on a deputation basis.

S.No.	Name of Post	Pay Scale	Number of Post
1	Registrar (Law)	Level-15 (₹ 182200-224100)	01

2. Detailed eligibility criteria and proforma of Application Form are available on the website of the NHRC (www.nhrc.nic.in)
3. The applications of eligible candidates who can be spared immediately on selection, may be forwarded to the Under Secretary (Establishment), NHRC, Manav Adhikar Bhawan, 'C' Block, GPO Complex, INA, New Delhi-110 023, Latest by 31.03.2026, alongwith the requisite documents.

Sd/- (Mukesh Kumar)
CBC 53101/11/0009/2526 Under Secretary (Estt) Tel : 011-24663278

Tender Bulletin
NATIONAL TESTING AGENCY

(An autonomous organization under the Department of Higher Education, Ministry of Education, Government of India), First Floor, NSIC-MDBP Building, Okhla Industrial Area, New Delhi-110020 Phone : 011 69095250 Website : www.nta.ac.in Mail : procurement@nta.ac.in

Two Bid System (Tech & Fin) Tenders are invited online on behalf of NTA from the eligible and experienced Agencies / PSU / Firms for the following various activities in connection with the forthcoming NEET(UG) 2026 Exam.

Sr. No.	Tender No.	Name of Work	Estimated Cost (Rs.)	Earnest Money (EMD) (Rs.)	Last Date of Submission
1	GeM/2026/B/7238608	CCTV Surveillance	Rs. 25.00 Crores	Rs. 25 Lakh	6th March 2026
2	GeM/2026/B/7240881	Frisking & Crowd Control	Rs. 7.00 Crores	Rs. 7 Lakh	7th March 2026
3	GeM/2026/B/7238683	Biometric (Aadhar based)	Rs. 15 Crores	Rs. 15 Lakh	7th March 2026

Tender Form available at www.gem.gov.in & link available on NTA's website www.nta.ac.in Submission through e-Tendering on GeM portal only.

CBC 21354/12/0009/2526 Sd/- Director (Procurement)

India-US trade deal to be operationalised in April: Goyal

Centre launches new interventions to support country's exporters

GYANENDRA KESHRI
NEW DELHI, DHNS

Piyush Goyal

An interim trade agreement between India and the US is likely to be signed next month and would be operationalised by April, Commerce Minister Piyush Goyal said on Friday.

Trade deals with the UK and Oman, which were announced recently, are also likely to become operational from April, while the New Zealand deal is likely to be operationalised from September.

On the free trade deal with the EU, Goyal said that all 27 member countries are eager to implement the deal as soon as possible.

Chief negotiators from India and the US are scheduled to hold a series of meetings to finalise the legal text of the trade deal, which was announced earlier this month, following a phone call between Prime Minister Narendra Modi and US President Donald Trump.

Joint Secretary in the Department of Commerce Darpan Jain, who is the chief negotiator from the Indian side, is scheduled to visit Washington from February 23. The team will be in the US till the end of next week.

US Trade Representative (USTR) Jamieson Greer may visit New Delhi in March to sign the agreement.

Speaking at an event at the AI Impact Summit, US Ambassador to India Sergio Gor said the India-US trade deal would be signed very soon. "In fact, even this week, we have both teams talking to each other and actively getting to a place where both will be able to sign," he said.

"We are thrilled that the interim deal is done. You have a few tweaking points that are left to do, but it's done. So the signing will happen sooner than later," Gor added.

Meanwhile, the Centre on Friday launched seven more interventions under the Rs 25,060-crore Export Promotion Mission to boost the country's outbound shipments.

Goyal urged exporters, especially MSMEs to take advantage of the scheme. He said India's expanding network of FTAs has significantly enhanced market access for Indian exporters. The minister noted that nearly 70% of global GDP and two-thirds of global trade are now accessible to Indian exporters through nine concluded FTAs. These agreements provide preferential access across sectors in 38 developed and emerging economies, the minister said.

The new interventions announced under the Export Promotion Mission include support for alternative trade instruments (export factoring); credit assistance for ecommerce exporters and support for emerging export opportunities.

The Federation of Indian Export Organisations (FIEO) said the new interventions under the Export Promotion Mission (EPM) are structural steps towards enhancing MSME competitiveness and expanding India's global market presence. It addresses the fundamental constraints that limit MSME export growth — high cost of credit, limited access to diversified trade finance, compliance burdens, logistics inefficiencies, and information gaps, said FIEO President SC Ralhan.

Rupee tanks 26 paise against US dollar

MUMBAI, PTI: The rupee plunged 26 paise to settle at 90.94 against the US dollar on Friday, tracking a strong American currency against major currencies and higher crude oil prices amid intensifying US-Iran tensions.

Positive momentum in domestic equity markets failed to support the Indian currency, analysts said. They attributed the strengthening greenback and volatile crude prices to heightened tension between the US and Iran, with both countries signalling they are prepared for war if talks on Tehran's nuclear programme fizzle out.

At the interbank forex, the rupee opened at 90.94 against the dollar and touched the intraday low of 91.04 during the session. It ended the session at 90.94, registering a steep loss of 26 paise from the previous closing level.

Meanwhile, the dollar index, which gauges the greenback's strength against a basket of six currencies, was trading higher by 0.01% at 97.86.

Ecofluence 3.0 begins at Indus Business Academy

(Left to right) Dr Mansi Bansal, Dr Subhash Sharma, Dr R S Deshpande, Dr S Mahendra Dev, Dr Manish Jain, Dr Charan Singh, Dr Ravindra Brahme and Prof Prashant Kulkarni at the inauguration of Ecofluence 3.0.

Ecofluence 3.0 ('Eco' stands for economics), an international conference organised by Indus Business Academy (IBA) in association with Indian Economic Association (IEA) and Association of Indian Management Schools (AIMS), and supported by Association of Management Development Institutions in South Asia (AMDISA), commenced yesterday at IBA.

IBA's director Dr Easwar Krishna Iyer welcomed the delegates. The academy's chief mentor and chairman - governing council Dr Subhash Sharma and conference co-chairs Prof Prashant Kulkarni and Dr Mansi Bansal addressed the delegates and explained the concept of Ecofluence.

Dr S Mahendra Dev, Chairman, Prime Minister's Economic Advisory Council (PM-EAC) delivered the inaugural address as chief guest. Dr Charan Singh, Founder and CEO, EGROW Foundation, addressed the gathering as guest of honour. Dr R S Deshpande, Chair - Advisory Committee and Dr Ravindra Brahme, General Secretary, IEA, were among the speakers at the inauguration.

A highlight of the morning was the release of the book 'Micro-Motives and Macro-Behaviour of Modinomics' authored by Prof Prashant Kulkarni and Dr Mansi Bansal. Thought-provoking talks marked the day. Dr Shishir Jha spoke on 'The Digital and the Regenerative' while Dr Pravakar Sahoo dwelt on 'Decoding Government Policies'. A panel comprising Dr Neelakanta N T, Dr Mahesha M, Dr Shiva Subramanian, Dr B M Nasir Khan and Dr K S Rajshekara discussed 'Karnataka, India and the Digital Economy'.

A session on 'Development Economics and Sustainability' had Dr M H Suryanarayana, Dr Ashok Dalwai, Dr Lallan Prasad, Dr Vinayak Deshpande, Dr Elumalai Kannan, Dr N Sivakumar, Dr Navitha Thimmaiah and Dr Pushkarni Panchamukhi. Among the dignitaries attending the event were Dr Manish Jain, Chairman and Founder CEO, IBA and Dr Anup Pujari IAS (retd).

Preliminary rounds of a debate and research championship were held too.

Curated by DH Brandspot

Dealing with AI

- AI could accelerate global economic growth by about a percentage point
- AI to help India move closer to 'Viksit Bharat'
- Globally, 40% of jobs will be affected by AI
- IMF to continue working with countries to understand what's happening in AI
- Financial stability concerns could arise from rapid technological shifts
- There is need to revamp the education system for a new world

AI can lift global growth, but risks displacing jobs: IMF chief

Says digital infra spend, young population to help India

AJITH ATHRADY
NEW DELHI, DHNS

International Monetary Fund (IMF) Managing Director Kristalina Georgieva (in pink jacket) during a visit to Humayun's Tomb in New Delhi earlier this week. PTI

International Monetary Fund (IMF) Managing Director Kristalina Georgieva on Friday said Artificial Intelligence (AI) has the potential to lift global growth by around 0.8 percentage points, but she cautioned about the risks of displacement of jobs and threats to financial stability.

Participating in the AI Impact Summit, 2026, she said AI could accelerate global economic growth and help India move closer to its "Viksit Bharat" aspirations.

"AI can lift up global growth by almost a percentage point. We say 0.8%. It would mean that the world would grow faster than it did before the COVID pandemic. And that is fantastic for creating more opportunities, more jobs. This is the magnitude that we see for India, and it would mean that India's Viksit Bharat is achievable," Georgieva said.

She observed that India may be relatively well-positioned given its investment in digital public infrastructure and its young population, which tends to be more open to technology adoption and innovation.

Cautioning about the negative impact of AI on the labour market, Georgieva said, "We calculated this risk as very high. We actually see the impact of AI on the labour market like a tsunami hitting it. Globally, 40% of jobs will be affected by AI, some enhanced, others eliminated. In emerging markets 40%, but in advanced economies, 60%. And that is happening over a relatively short period of time."

She said the IMF will continue to work with countries to understand what is happening in AI and then how to project it for policies for the future.

She also flagged financial stability concerns arising from rapid technological shifts.

Despite these concerns, the IMF chief struck an optimistic tone, stressing that AI's impact would be positive on employment. However, it could lead to few people getting some jobs and a large swathe of the population getting low-paid work.

"What concerns us the most is that jobs that disappear tend to be entry-level ones. They are routine and they are easily automated. So if you are in this place of the labour market, that is easily automated, of course, that creates a risk for you," she said.

To address AI advancement, she said there is a need to revamp the education system for a new world.

She also stressed the need for robust support systems, social protection, and an enabling environment to help workers navigate the dramatic changes in the labour market.

PM holds talks with heads of tech giants, world leaders

NEW DELHI, DHNS

Prime Minister Narendra Modi meets Prince Alois of Liechtenstein on the sidelines of the India AI Impact Summit 2026 in New Delhi on Friday. PTI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Friday series of meeting including roundtables with CEOs and founders of 16 AI and deep-tech startups and discussed the potential of harnessing AI in different sectors, including agriculture, and promoting higher education in the mother tongue.

The business leaders presented their ideas and work during the interaction, officials said.

The dignitaries and tech leaders were here to attend the India AI Impact Summit that was held at Bharat Mandapam from February 16-20.

The PM also held separate meetings with heads of two leading firms. He also held bilaterals with the leaders of four countries – Sri Lankan President Anura Kumara Dissanayake, Slovakian President Peter Pellegrini, Alois, Hereditary Prince of Liechtenstein, and Mauritius Prime Minister Navinchandra Ramgoolam.

Modi said he had a "wonderful" meeting with Dissanayake, during which the two leaders took stock of the progress in India-Sri Lanka relations in recent times.

"Strengthening friendship with a valued neighbour... We also discussed avenues of cooperation in areas such as energy, connectivity, infrastructure, healthcare, skilling, culture, blue economy and more," Modi said.

On his meeting with Pellegrini, the PM said the India-EU FTA will create several opportunities to boost trade and investment between India and Slovakia.

"Other subjects we discussed included cooperation in digital technology, startups, digital public infrastructure, defence, space, and more," he said.

During his meeting with leaders from Liechtenstein, Modi said he discussed the strong potential of economic linkages between the two nations, particularly after the India-EU FTA, and cooperation in areas such as innovation, technology, skilling, and R&D.

The PM also held a meeting with UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres, and discussed making AI all-inclusive and how the UN can play a constructive role.

Summit sees investment commitments of $250 bn towards AI infrastructure: Vaishnaw

NEW DELHI, DHNS: Union IT Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw on Friday said the India AI Impact Summit 2026 has attracted investment commitments of over $250 billion related to infrastructure.

Ashwini Vaishnaw

Around $20 billion is committed by VCs and deep-tech funding. The commitments are largely linked to infrastructure required to power India's AI ecosystem, including data centres, semiconductor facilities, high-performance computing capacity and digital connectivity, the minister said.

Insisting that the summit was a grand success, Vaishnaw said there were over five lakh visitors and drew significant interest from global technology players, investors, and startups. "The world has confidence in India's role in the new AI age," he said.

The minister also said the government would soon begin work on the AI Mission 2.0, which will focus on developing "a totally new level of models, common compute, safety" and expanding foundational capabilities across the AI stack.

All major nations, which matter in the artificial intelligence space, have signed the India AI Impact Summit 2026 declaration and it will be announced on Saturday after the conclusion of the event.

He said that over 70 countries have already signed the declaration, and the number is expected to cross 80.

Meanwhile, Vaishnaw said the government is mulling a legal framework to address cybersecurity challenges and opportunities.

AI-powered autonomous driving technology takes centre-stage at India AI Impact Expo

UMA KANNAN
NEW DELHI, DHNS

At the India AI Impact Expo 2026, one can experience autonomous driving, as the Tata Group showcased its AI-powered autonomous driving technology. With multiple AI agents, including Voice AI, the technology can facilitate radar-based navigation in fog and user-approved overtakes.

Sreenivasa Chakravarti, Vice-President and Global Head — IoT and Digital Engineering, Tata Consultancy Services, told *DH* that the demo was attempting to bring to life how the real world translates into the virtual AI world.

Automation occurs when introducing automatic capability, but autonomous does not require the human. When we say autonomous car, we refer to the ultimate version, where it is driverless, he said.

In reality, however, is it possible to be driverless? "It's a dream," Chakravarti said, adding that as the journey towards autonomous driving progresses, there are a lot of things that come in the way.

In the case of personalisation, one can add settings and features accordingly. One may invoke some driving capability, for instance, driver assist safety or neighbouring car collision detection.

"All these features are available today, and many of the new generation cars are already bringing them out. The features will come to life depending on what you are dealing with — entry-level, mid-market, or a luxury car," he said.

Referring to the AI-powered autonomous driving technology that was on display, he said it is primarily built up on an NVIDIA stack, using all the latest chip capabilities that are available. "All of these have been built by our teams, and they have been deployed into the vehicle. For example, it can reverse, parallel park and can identify a parking slot for itself. If you enter a destination, it can identify and take that route," he explained.

These capabilities are now available for OEMs. Speaking on the future of technology, Chakravarti said that they anticipate public infrastructure across the globe will start moving towards 6G, which is the upcoming sixth-generation cellular technology.

What is the advantage of 6G? "For any of the capabilities you deploy, you need a very rapid response. You cannot wait for one. It's a millisecond, microsecond kind of a response. 6G brings in those kinds of capabilities and we do expect a lot of these to become commercially viable in the next couple of years. Once that happens, one will certainly see a scaled adoption of many of the features, and that could be a big game changer," he added.

ENERGY TALK

US negotiating with India on Venezuelan oil sale, says US envoy

NEW DELHI, REUTERS

The United States is in "active negotiation" over the sale of Venezuelan oil to India, to help the latter diversify its sources of crude oil, US Ambassador to India Sergio Gor said on Friday.

The US has made diversification away from Russian crude a condition for cutting tariffs on goods imported from India, the world's third-biggest oil importer and consumer.

"The Department of Energy is speaking to the Ministry of Energy here, and so we're hoping to have some news of that very soon," Gor told reporters on the sidelines of an event in New Delhi, where India joined the US-led Pax Silica initiative aimed at building a silicon supply-chain for high-tech products.

US President Donald Trump this month agreed to cut tariffs on Indian goods to 18% under an interim trade deal. He also removed a 25% punitive levy after India agreed to end the purchase of Russian oil, which the US said helps fund Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

He said India would buy more oil from the US and potentially Venezuela.

A final trade deal with India will be signed "sooner than later" as a "few tweaking points" are required, Gor said, adding Trump has been invited to India by Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

The US and allies imposed sanctions on Russia's energy sector, following Russia's 2022 invasion of Ukraine.

India then became the top customer for Russian seaborne crude, which it bought at rock-bottom prices, to the consternation of Western nations.

"On the oil, there's an agreement... We have seen India diversify on their oil. There is a commitment. This is not about India. The United States doesn't want anyone buying Russian oil," Gor said.

The US had pitched the sale of Venezuelan oil to India to help replace Russian oil imports, Reuters reported last month.

It granted licences to trading houses Vitol and Trafigura to market and sell millions of barrels of Venezuelan oil after capturing Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro last month and reaching a supply agreement with interim President Delcy Rodriguez.

State-run Indian Oil Corporation, Hindustan Petroleum and Bharat Petroleum, as well as private-sector refiners Reliance Industries and HPCL-Mittal Energy have ordered Venezuelan oil, Reuters has reported.

SERGIO GOR, US Ambassador to India

"On the oil, there's an agreement... We have seen India diversify on their oil. There is a commitment. This is not about India. The United States doesn't want anyone buying Russian oil.

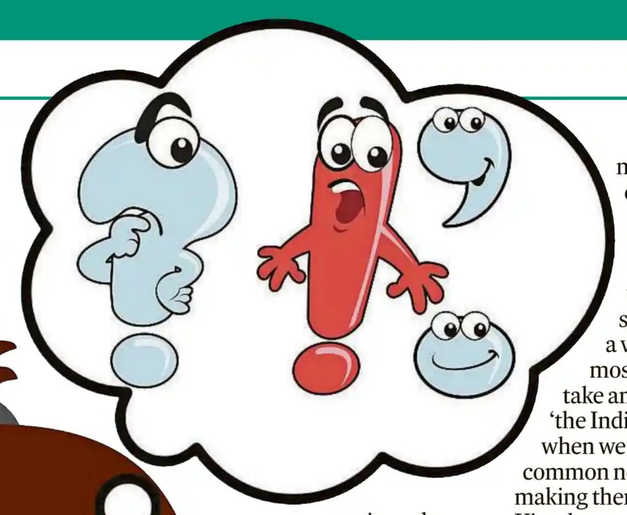
COMMAS can save lives

Valsala Rajan explores how punctuation and grammar can completely change the meaning of our sentences

Let's Eat Children!, said the invitation. "Oh dear! Really?? I'm not sure we want to do that..." I stammered when I read the invitation to the party. "Why?? She's inviting you to tea at her house; you have to go," my friend said. "But, ... she says we're going to eat children..." I know, I know... I'm being picky. But I don't get why everyone else isn't?

A single missing comma can wreak havoc. But so can an extra comma, as Lynn Truss in her hilarious book (Eats, Shoots and Leaves) on punctuation, points out. A panda all dressed up as a cowboy walked into a bar. He ordered some fries and a beer, enjoyed them, and got up to leave. As he was leaving, he took out a gun, fired a couple of well-aimed shots at the bar, and proceeded to walk out the door. "Hey, you!" shouted the bartender. "What do you think you're doing? Not only have you not paid, but you've also destroyed my bar." The panda turned around and looked at him. He threw a pocketbook of badly edited wildlife terms at him. "I'm a panda. Look it up!" he said. The bewildered bartender did just that and saw this entry: "Panda: Eats, shoots and leaves". It took a second for the perplexed bartender to get it... With the comma, the sentence lists three actions the panda performs: it eats, then it shoots a gun, and finally it leaves the place. Without the comma, it says what it's meant to. And then, of course, there are sentences where the mistake is doubled: After we ate Dad, Grandpa and I watched a movie. Cannibals! Ah well... moving on...

Grammar isn't just the horrible set of rules that make your life miserable. Yes, there are rules, but no, they can't be avoided unless you're only ever going to WhatsApp. And yes, they are an absolute must for clear, respectable communication. Even if you have an actor (noun) and an action (verb) in your sentence, they can meaningfully communicate only if the structure, word forms, and usage with the correct parts of speech, tenses, and punctuation are in place. Punctuation marks are NOT just squiggly lines that mean nothing! On the contrary, they are the dots and dashes that actually give correct meaning to what you're trying to say.



And it's not just that. Haven't you read those 'looonng' sentences where you get to the end and find that you haven't a clue what you just read and have to go back and read it again? Reading a long sentence can be like sitting in a luxury car that goes on and on with never a brake or turn. Boring, and so you snooze. Punctuation is the much-needed jolt that keeps you awake. If you're the writer, and especially if you're a writer who is somewhat weak in the punctuation department, keep your sentences short. No more than 20-25 words. You can't go far wrong with a sentence like 'Jack went up the hill'. The longer it is, the more confusing it can get.

One of my biggest bugbears when reading student essays is why oh why can't they get those three little words called articles, right? Agreed, there are a lot of prepositions! Maybe it's hard to know all of them (it still doesn't explain to me why people can't see that 'on' and 'in' are different! You can't sit in a bench!). To get back to articles, there are only three! Surely that can be learnt! Most nouns need an article. A book and an orange. 'A' when you talk about the generic and 'the' when you talk about the specific. That seems easy, doesn't it? 'An' goes with a noun that has a vowel sound — not necessarily always a vowel. 'The' seems to cause the most problems. Proper nouns don't take an article. It's never 'the Rahul' or 'the India'. The only time we'd use 'the' is when we refer to full names that contain common nouns or indicate a collection, making them descriptive — hence the United Kingdom or the United States.

"He told he'll come in 15 minutes." Really? Told whom? 'Told' is a form of reported speech and is usually followed by the person/people who were told. 'He told me' or 'He said that'. Not hard.

These are the simplest things you can learn. Good grammar means clarity. Clarity means good communication and a professional appearance. Clarity prevents miscommunication and ensures that what you meant is what you said. Bad grammar can often make a bad impression. How can you make it right? Well, I suggest starting with the basic rules, but if you're looking for real all-around improvement, read! You don't have to stop and look at every sentence and examine the syntax, the vocabulary, and the grammar. You just have to enjoy the story! And in time, you will start automatically doing the right things with the language without even knowing it.

And now I have to get back to grading essays!

3 animated MOVIES on forests

They remind young viewers why forests and nature matter

My Neighbor Totoro (1988)

Director: Hayao Miyazaki

Two young sisters, Satsuki and Mei, move to a quiet countryside home to be closer to their hospitalised mother. The vast forest beside their house is filled with towering camphor trees, secret paths, and magical energy. One tree in particular — the great camphor tree — is the home of Totoro, a gentle forest spirit who only appears to children. The movie depicts forests as places of imagination and calm, where children get to learn that nature can bring joy and comfort.

FernGully: The Last Rainforest (1992)

Director: Bill Kroyer

Deep within the FernGully rainforest lives a community of fairies and animals who protect their home's beauty. The forest is alive with glowing plants, waterfalls, giant mushrooms, and winding vines. When human loggers arrive with chainsaws and machines and begin cutting down trees, they accidentally release Hexxus, a dark spirit of pollution who weakens the forest's magic. Crysta, a fairy, shrinks a human named Zak and shows him the rainforest's wonders, eventually convincing him to help save it. The film carries a strong message about the importance of protecting the ecosystems that thrive in forests.

The Lorax (2012)

Director: Chris Renaud

The story begins in a dull, treeless town called Thneedville, where everything is artificial. A young boy, Ted, learns about a legendary forest of fluffy, colourful Truffula trees from Once-ler. Through flashbacks, viewers get to see this forest with tall, swaying Truffula tufts, peaceful ponds, and wildlife thriving among the trees. Once-ler's greed led to massive harvesting of Truffula trees to make Thneeds, stripping the forest bare. Ted embarks on a mission to convince the Once-ler to plant the last seed of a Truffula tree and bring the forest back.

Should exams be replaced with project-based assessments?

Open Sesame readers talk it out

YES

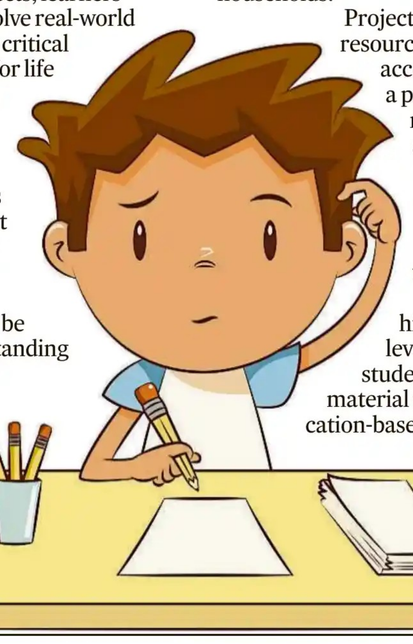
Examinations have long been used to measure students' learning, but they often test memory more than true understanding. Project-based assessments offer a meaningful alternative by focusing on how students apply knowledge in practical situations. Through projects, learners research, analyse, collaborate, and solve real-world problems, which helps them develop critical thinking and creativity. These skills are essential for life beyond the classroom and cannot be fully judged through written exams alone.

Projects also reduce the stress and pressure associated with exams. Project work allows students to learn at their own pace, explore topics in depth, and showcase their strengths in different ways, such as presentations, models, or reports. This makes assessment more inclusive and learner-friendly.

However, completely replacing exams may not be practical. Exams help evaluate individual understanding and ensure fairness through standardisation.

In conclusion, project-based assessments deserve a stronger role in education, while exams should not be eliminated entirely.

AKSHAY GOWDA, 13
Bengaluru, Karnataka



NO

Exams have been one of the most accessible and efficient ways to evaluate a student's knowledge, as the only materials necessary for taking an exam are paper and a pen. Therefore, they are generally accessible even to students who come from low-income households.

Project-based assessments often require resources such as a computer, internet access, art and craft supplies, and guidance from a parent. Not every child will have access to these resources, giving wealthier students an unfair advantage.

In exams, each student is in the same environment, and there is little chance of receiving help from anyone else. Thus, the grade reflects the student's own comprehension of the study material.

Even with their advantages, exams can be highly stressful and do not always test students' level of understanding. Many times, they require students to memorise rather than understand the material they are studying. Schools could add application-based questions to incorporate more of these assessment types instead of relying so heavily on memorisation.

SUHAAN SR, 14
Bengaluru, Karnataka

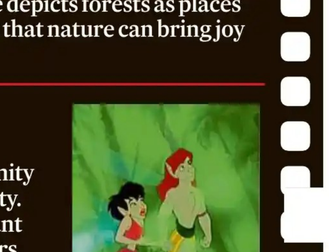
LETTER WRITING

Write an open letter to your favourite game

If you could have a conversation with your favourite video or mobile game, what would you like to know from it, and what would you tell it about you? Write an open letter and share it with us. You stand a chance of being featured in an upcoming edition. Mail your work to *opensesame@deccanherald.co.in*. Open to children below 16 years. Don't forget to mention your name, age, and city, and send us a recent photograph. Entries close on February 26.

ART CORNER

Love painting?



Want to showcase your flair for colours? Send your paintings on the theme 'Welcome spring' to *Open Sesame* and stand a chance to get featured in an upcoming edition. Mail photographs of your work to *opensesame@deccanherald.co.in*. Open to children below 16 years. Don't forget to mention your name, age, and city. And send us a recent photograph of yourself. Entries close on March 12.

POETS IN THE MAKING

Want to see your poetry in print?

Send in poems on the topic 'If I had wings...' to *Open Sesame*. You may be featured in an upcoming edition. Mail your work — not more than 12 lines — to *opensesame@deccanherald.co.in*. Entries close on March 5. Open to children below 16 years. Don't forget to mention your name, age, and city. And send us a recent photograph.

Word of the Week

quintessential

(adjective) — being the perfect example of something

Usage:
— Eliza is the quintessential storyteller.
— Idlis are Saira's quintessential comfort food.

This Week:

Scales and tails

Open Sesame Quiz

Take the fun Open Sesame quiz, and stand a chance to win gift vouchers worth Rs 500. Open to children below 16 years.

Q1 World Pangolin Day is observed every 3rd Saturday of February. Pangolins are the only mammals completely covered in large, overlapping scales. What is the fibrous protein of which those are made?

Q2 Pangolins are the world's most trafficked mammals. Three of eight pangolin species are 'critically endangered'. The Sunda and Philippines pangolins are two of them. Which is the third?

Q3 Which zoological park in India, located in the Chandaka forest and home to the Kanjia lake, is famous as the chief conservation breeding centre for the Indian pangolin?

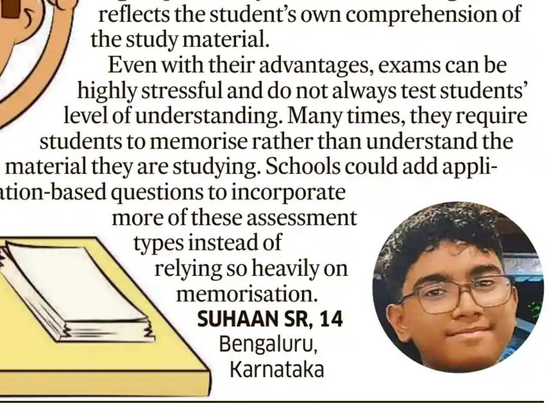
Scan the QR code
Or visit bit.ly/DHopensesame to participate in the quiz.

Q4 **Rhyme Time:** Two clues to which the answers rhyme with each other.
Clue A: When threatened, the pangolin curls up into a __.
Clue B: Season between summer and winter.

Q5 **Clue Cluster:** In 2017, which celebrity actively campaigned for the protection of pangolins? Use these clues.
a) 'Kung Fu Pangolin'
b) WildAid
c) Hong Kong
d) 'Rush Hour'

WINNER'S NAMES: Ritul Chindak (14), Banahatti; Ridhvan Deshpande (12), Savadatti; Diya Gondkar (14), T Narasipura.
ANSWERS TO LAST WEEK'S QUIZ: A1) Indian State Broadcasting Service (ISBS), A2) Vividh Bharati, A3) Prasar Bharati, A4) Sky/Shy, A5) Urdu.

CROSSWORD



BY CHITTARANJAN ANDRADE

Across
1 Silver medal position (6)
4 Poke with sharp object (3)
7 Friday the unlucky day (10)
8 Charitable donations (4)
10 Excess body fat (4)
15 A century (3,7)
16 Freshly purchased (3)
17 Just missed the bronze medal (6)

Down
1 Indian musical instrument (5)
2 Carpenter's instrument (6)
3 A short letter (4)
5 Currency in Thailand (4)
6 Source of ground water (4)
9 Reflecting glass (6)
11 Dull pain (4)
12 Breadth (5)
13 Unit of currency (4)
14 Reverse or correct an action (4)

ANSWERS
Across: 1 Second, 4 Jab, 7 Thirteenth, 8 Alms, 10 Flab, 15 One hundred, 16 New, 17 Fourth.
Down: 1 Sitar, 2 Chisel, 3 Note, 5 Baht, 6 Well, 9 Mirror, 11 Ache, 12 Width, 13 Coin, 14 Undo.

Children at an alternative school in Bengaluru learn language, maths and motor skills through activities. DH PHOTO/B K JANARDHAN

NO TEXTBOOKS, SYLLABUS, EXAMS

The schooling dilemma

Do students from non-conventional schools find it hard to adapt in a world shaped by mainstream education? Shraddha A K, who studied in two 'alternative' schools, shares her experience

One of the questions I dread in casual conversations is, "Which school did you go to?" My response evokes disbelief, some fascination, and quite a bit of judgement.

I went through alternative schooling. Until Class 10, I had no uniforms, fixed subjects, textbooks or timetable. I sat in classes with children younger and older than me. We had no homework, no exams, and no school diary for teachers to leave feedback for parents. I called my teachers by their first names.

I attended a Montessori school. Most people associate these centres with toddlers or children with special needs. Yes, the Montessori method began in 1907 for young children, but it has since evolved to include programmes such as Erdkinder for adolescents.

It was my mother's decision to send me to a school that was nothing like her own, where teachers thrashed students and forced them into a rigid routine. She had studied at a central government-run school. To her luck, she discovered an alternative school just a 10-minute drive from where we lived.

Namma Shaale was located on Hennur-Bagalur Main Road in Bengaluru. The fee was significantly higher than at conventional schools, but my mother was sold on their "unique method" of education. Children there walked around barefoot and greeted every visitor with a 'Namaste'. They were engrossed in their activities, while the teacher observed them from a distance. If someone made a mess or became rowdy, a bell reminded them to be mindful of their actions.

During our pre-primary years, we were first taught everyday tasks like sweeping, wiping surfaces, putting on our clothes, pouring water into glasses, and watering plants. The idea is to help children develop motor coordination and make sense of the world around them.

Comparative strengths

So what did I 'really study' at school? Recently, one of my colleagues was shocked to learn that I had never heard of the Champaran peasant agitation. For her, Champaran, a district in Bihar where Gandhi led his first Satyagraha in India to help indigo farmers, was a core memory from history classes. She went to a CBSE school. I, however, did not study India's freedom struggle in detail. "It didn't interest me much," I told her with a shrug. Instead, I spent days studying the Industrial Revolution, human civilisations, and the Jurassic era.

Does non-conventional schooling make children misfits in a world shaped by mainstream education? Are we, raised on the ideal of free will, able to survive in jobs defined by competition and hierarchies? Can we break into 'hard' careers like IT and medicine? Do we enjoy an edge over others?

I am 22. I have had a short career so far, first as a mixologist at multiple bars, and now as a reporter with this newspaper.

Choice over curriculum

Multiple models of alternative education exist today, but Montessori is built around the principle of 'follow the child'. It is defined by the 3Ps. The first is 'Presentation', where various topics are introduced to children, and they choose what interests them. The second is 'Practice', where they explore the topic using reading materials and activity tools. The third is 'Perfection', where they are allowed as much time as needed to master the topic. So instead of studying subjects like physics and biology on a broad level, I focused on specific concepts that interested me, such as photosynthesis and the Palaeozoic era.

It is true that one's interest ebbs and flows. Some days, my interest in a topic would wane within minutes. On others, I would be eager to explore. When 'Happy Feet', an animated film about a tap-dancing penguin, came out, I became so fascinated with penguins that I spent an entire month researching them. Next, I was intrigued by the history of dance, and later, by ENT infections after undergoing surgery for tonsillitis.

Our teachers were a mix of qualified academics and experts from different walks of life, brought in as and when their services were needed. Their role was to support our interests while also guiding us to explore diverse topics. They provided activity tools, reference books, online resources, and even prepared lessons themselves. They observed our progress and stepped in only when we struggled or sought help.

One of my fondest memories is learning to visualise the Big Bang theory. Rama Reddy, the founder of our school, would place a Marie Gold biscuit on a plate and stab it with a pencil. It sent crumbs scattering in all directions, like how the universe expanded from a single point. I learnt English grammar through grammar boxes (wooden boxes that had separate compartments for the eight parts of speech). I learnt place values (units, tens, hundreds, and thousands) using a string of golden beads, and the concept of square roots with a wooden pegboard.

Without textbooks, our school bags were light. We usually carried a few toys, a lunchbox, and a book or two for personal reading. The only things with set timings were lunch and extracurricular activities. Our extracurricular time was far beyond sports, arts, and scouts. We did weaving, dyeing and cotton spinning. We engaged in carpentry and cement work. We grew our own chillies and tomatoes. We looked after fish, tadpoles, snails, turtles, a tortoise, and dogs on our campus.

Stint at 'normal'

My school shut down when I was in my first year of upper elementary. My mother now faced a dilemma: where should I go next? She could see I was turning out different from my cousins, who were attending regular schools. I was outgoing and confident. I could talk to strangers. I could discuss science for hours. Children of some scientists attended my school, which reassured her that we were on the right path.

The difference with my cousins was obvious to me, too. During playtime, we would pretend to run a classroom. While they acted out teachers as strict disciplinarians, I portrayed them as gentle and observant. My extended family often teased me for not being a "prim and proper" student because I didn't say "Good morning, teacher" or wear a uniform. When my uncles and aunts came to pick me up from school, they found me covered in mud or sitting in a tree and assumed I was at an "asylum". Parents of other children would put me to the test to prove that my schooling was of no use. "Tell me the table of five" was the sort of question I was asked.

I was finally enrolled in a regular international school. It was a whole new world. Instead of mats and low desks (chowkis), we had benches. The classrooms were fully closed, unlike the partially open ones before, where I could spot birds and squirrels. There were 40 students in a class instead of just seven or eight. Wearing a uniform was new to me, as was doing homework. Until then, I thought a diary was where I wrote letters to myself, but teachers were using it to write complaints to my mother because I had taken off my blazer. I was even thrown out of class for not saying 'Sir' or 'Ma'am' to my teachers. Library visits were restricted. I wrote a test for the first time and came last. A teacher hit me.

In just six months, my mother pulled me out and I joined Akshara Montessori House of Children in Sathnur. "I do not see a failure. She is eloquent, and I see potential," Sophie Sivashankar, founder and principal of the school, told my mother and admitted me to Class 5.

Facing board exams

I was back to my old ways. The school was set on a farm. We farmed, cared for geese, buffaloes, and cows, and went birdwatching. We could leave the classroom or take a nap anytime. We once held a student-teacher parliament, where students debated 'bills' demanding longer lunch breaks and games sessions in the morning. On another occasion, we built a fire extinguisher from scratch and tested it by lighting a bonfire in our football field.

However, this school had elements of mainstream education too. Older children used tables and chairs. Occasionally, we were assigned projects and homework related to maths and science. In Class 10, we had a timetable and even textbooks. We called our teachers by adding 'teacher' to their names.

Competition, whether in academics or sports, wasn't allowed as Sophie believed it went against the school philosophy. However, when we expressed our desire for exposure, we were allowed to participate in interschool games. And we often won, especially at girls' events.

The Class 10 boards were the first exams I had to face, but I wasn't stressed about them, perhaps because I had never felt competitive outside of sports. The same went for my classmates. Before the exams, we played 'Never Have I Ever' and 'Truth or Dare', while students from regular schools had their noses buried in books. I completed my Class 10 exams through the National Institute of Open Schooling (NIOS) board and passed with 76%. None of the students from my alma mater has ever failed Class 10.

Suspension in college

By the time I reached pre-university and college, I was somewhat used to big classrooms, blackboards, tables, and chairs. But I still struggled with memorising things. I failed my first English internal exam because I answered it in my own words rather than using the textbook definitions. When I tried to reason with the teacher that rote memorisation stifled creative thinking, I was thrown out of the class. Not being used to hierarchies, I often rubbed professors the wrong way. Sometimes I faced suspension, sometimes my mother was summoned. Over time, I learned to balance my creative answers with standard ones in exams. I excelled in subjects that interested me (medical microbiology, journalism, English, Kannada, and biostatistics) and didn't worry about scoring average in subjects I didn't enjoy, like chemistry and industrial microbiology. I used to be slow with deadlines when I was not interested in something, and I learned to accept it.

Battling rat race

Despite the scepticism surrounding folks like me, professor Indira Vijaysimha, founder of Poorna Learning Centre, a 30-year-old alternative school in Bengaluru, says more parents are choosing such schools today than 15 years ago. Many have experienced the pressures of the "rat race" and want their children to have the freedom to explore their passions. She adds that even mainstream schools are increasingly adopting alternative educational methods, as evidenced in the New Education Policy. According to Indira, these models emphasise self-reflection, social contribution, and a connection with nature. While these values may stand in contrast with modern society's focus on wealth and consumerism, she says they enrich life in profound ways.

She points to renowned personalities schooled differently. All three children of iconic Kannada novelist Shivaram Karanth were homeschooled, including zoologist K Ullas Karanth. And educationist Krishna Kumar, who served as the director of the National Council for Educational Research and Training, studied in a Gandhian school.

Contrary to popular belief, Indira says not many children drop out of alternative schooling midway. At her school, about 40% move out at the start of Class 10 so they can prepare for and write their board exams. She also says they go on to hold successful careers in diverse fields like others. For instance, the alumni from my high school include a neurosurgeon, a veterinarian, lawyers, and those pursuing finance, architecture and arts. The only significant difference she notices among such students is that they tend to be less influenced by peer pressure and competition.

For fashion design student Felicia Felix, integrating into mainstream education wasn't difficult, as NIOS offers flexible subjects and national and globally recognised credentials. Fardeen C M A admits that the rote learning and rigid syllabus he experienced in college shocked him, but the grounding he had received in his school nurtured his entrepreneurial spirit and social activism. Today, he is helping design a 125-acre eco retreat which will provide employment to tribal women. Free time and flexibility of alternative schooling shaped the creative instincts of filmmaker Paro Salil. She admits she would have struggled in a nine-to-five job, but the philosophy of self-learning has helped her adapt to fast-evolving technologies and systems. M K Maaz, a mechanical engineering student, says values like cleanliness and respect for nature set him apart from others.

Think about it: mainstream education produces as many 'failures' as 'successes'. Who isn't a misfit in that sense? At least I can say I enjoyed my time at school, I loved my teachers, and I didn't dread the end of the holidays.

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MUSICANA

Making punk rock for a cause

I Got The Wrong Tattoo addresses social issues like addiction through their music, writes Sathvi G Bhat

Four-part band, I Got The Wrong Tattoo, strives to preserve the spirit of punk rock by singing about socially relevant themes.

Initially, the Bengaluru-based band comprised vocalist Vishnu Menon and his childhood friend Anurag Randad. The duo began making music together in 2024. Since then, it has branched into a full-fledged punk rock band.

"Punk is more of a movement. We haven't figured out that movement yet, but we're figuring it out slowly," comments drummer Rohaan Nambiar.

The band currently comprises Menon (vocals/guitars), Nambiar, Sugam Deka (guitar) and Randad (drum production and artwork).

Though they are prominently a punk rock band, they also draw inspiration from metal legends like Metallica and Avenged Sevenfold, in addition to Green Day.

Menon recalls, "I was 10 years old when I got to watch Green Day at their first ever sold-out concert 'Bullet in a Bible'." Since then, his goal has been to perform a concert like 'Bullet in a Bible'.

The band has a primary mission to move audiences with their craft. "I like to sometimes look into the crowd and spot someone who knows the lyrics, and the breaks. It really gets me going," Nambiar chimes in.

But there are unexpected perils to this traction too. "While we were performing in Kochi, a man in the audience just aggressively kept screaming the words 'I got the wrong tattoo' and had me in a chokehold and would not let go," Menon recalls.

The group is set to release their five-track EP, 'Addicted to a State of Mind', in the second week of March. It revolves around human error and the concept of addiction. While the titular track delves into grappling with denial and acceptance, 'Late night target practice' explores a conversation an addict has with himself.

Menon says, "The emotion we would use to describe this EP would be angst." And the soundscape draws from thrash metal, grunge, and progressive influences. "I was able to express the state of anxiety I felt through these genres," he adds.

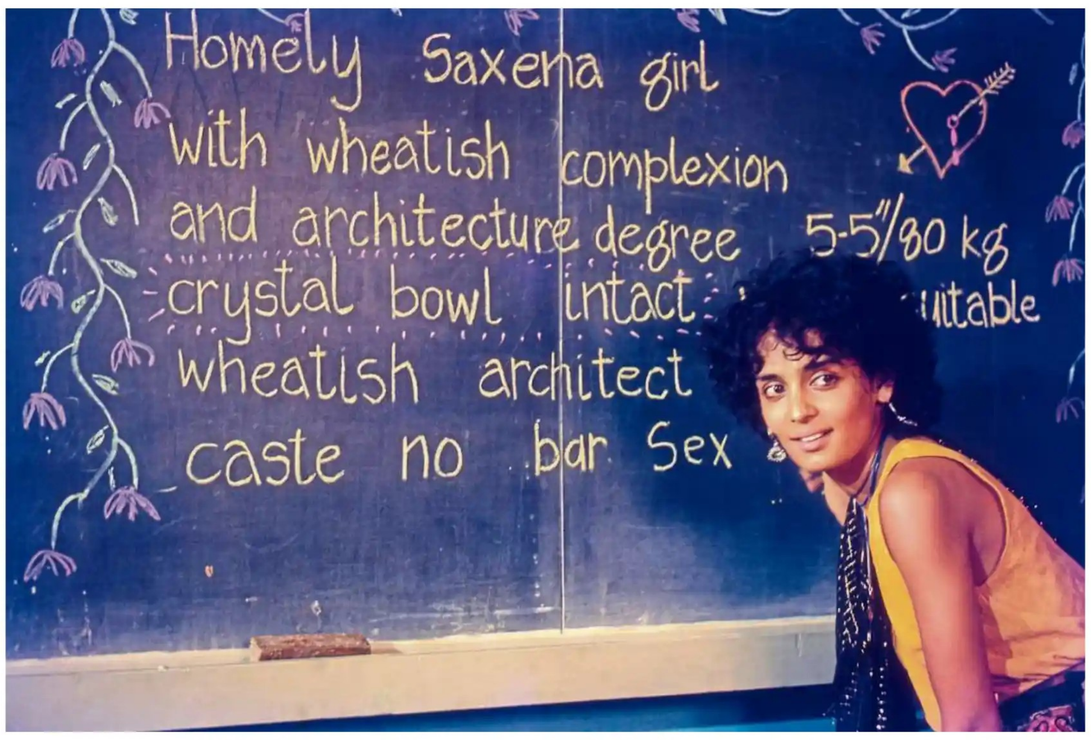
The band plans to print around 100 CDs of the EP and distribute them free to fans at the upcoming shows.

"I think the feeling of someone owning your art in a physical medium is much better than someone streaming your music," he explains.

The band is set to release an EP in March.

A quirky Roy film amid a big furore

As a debate over art and politics flares up at the Berlin film fest, restored cult classic 'In Which Annie Gives It Those Ones' reminds us that even 'fringe fun' can carry a political message, writes Savitha Karthik



Arundhati Roy plays Radha in the film.

Is all art political? This question has been central to many debates over the decades — the opening of the 76th Berlin International Film Festival (Berlinale) has brought it up yet again. The festival is on till February 22.

Acclaimed filmmaker Wim Wenders, president of this year's jury, triggered the debate when he told reporters, "We have to stay out of politics because if we make movies that are dedicatedly political, we enter the field of politics." The jury was being asked about German support for Israel's war in Gaza.

Author Arundhati Roy, slated to participate in the festival, has dropped out, calling the jury's stance "jaw-dropping". The festival is screening the restored version of her 1989 film, 'In Which Annie Gives It Those Ones' in its Classics section.

This doesn't quite come as a surprise; Roy has always been vocal about a wide range of topics, from the state of democracy to press freedom, from fascism and Israel's role in Gaza. In her acceptance speech after receiving the P Govinda Pillai award in 2023, she spoke about the horrors in Gaza and the silence around it, adding that if we say nothing, we are complicit in it. "Something in our moral selves will be altered forever."

Ironically, the 1989 film being shown at the Berlinale, directed and produced by Pradip Krishen, is also a "political" film, although in her latest book, 'Mother Mary Comes to Me', she says "it was never meant to be anything more than fun, fringe cinema". It still is a fun film, among other things.

Set in the '70s, the National awards-winning film revolves around a group of architecture students in their final year, going about their classes, and talking about their dreams, hopes and disillusionments. There's Anand Grover, aka 'Annie' (played by Arjun Raina) who is always 'giving it those ones' — 'those ones' is Delhi University slang of the '70s; it refers to Annie doing 'his usual thing' — in this case, his takes on life and society.

In the film, Roy plays Radha, who challenges accepted notions about urban architecture — asking questions about who we are building for and why. It has an ensemble cast, including a blink-and-miss appearance by Shah Rukh Khan, in one of his earliest screen appearances, and Raghubir Yadav.

One of Annie's 'those ones' is his idea of planting fruit-bearing trees along railway tracks across the country. His take is that the soil is most fertile, enriched as it is by open defecation, a reality of the India he has seen and grown up in. He constantly mocks his principal, who goes by the nickname of Yamdoot (messenger of the god of death) played by Roshan Seth. The tensions between the two come to a head.

FEEDBACK
Send your ideas and comments to dhonsat @deccanherald.co.in

Several adventures follow before the jury assesses the students' final thesis — Radha appears in a sari and a hat, with an air of lazy confidence and irreverence, as if to make a statement. Soon, the results are out — some sail through, others don't. An epilogue shows you the fates of all the students, some years later.

The is not an explicitly angry film, although it reveals undercurrents of frustration — it has poignancy and humour, and you begin to root for each one of the characters. One is not sure if it is serendipity or design that a bunch of students strum along to 'The Boxer' by Simon and Garfunkel. With lines like, "I have squandered my resistance/For a pocketful of mumbles/Such are promises", the song is at once political and personal, and summarises the film's theme as well.

'In Which Annie...' shows a young India, an India where the youth are unafraid to ask questions and challenge authority. There is hope and cynicism in equal parts, and it is at once reminiscent of the 2005 Sudhir Mishra directorial, 'Hazaaron Khwaishein Aisi', which also discusses the aspirations of college-going youth against the backdrop of the Emergency.

The cult classic has recently been restored in 4K by The Film Heritage Foundation, based in Mumbai and helmed by Shivendra Singh Dungarpur.

The band that gave us 'Hotel California' wins another accolade. Their record-breaking albums reaffirm an enduring legacy, writes Stanley Carvalho

50 years on, Eagles continue to soar

Indisputably one of the best rock bands since the swinging '70s, Eagles have just won another accolade, a fitting tribute in the 50th year since their debut album and iconic hit 'Hotel California' was released.

The legendary album of the Eagles 'Their Greatest Hits 1971-75', released in February 1976, has been certified the first LP in history as 'Quadruple Diamond' by the Recording Industry Association of America (RIAA).

The LP became the first to sell over 40 million copies, officially becoming the best-selling album of all time in the U S.

Interestingly, the band's 1976 record 'Hotel California' has been certified 28x platinum (28 million units sold), claiming the third best-selling album rank in the U S, Michael Jackson's 'Thriller' is in second position certified 34x platinum.

So why do the Eagles have the first and third best-selling albums of all time in the U S? And not the Beatles, Elvis Presley, The Rolling Stones, Led Zeppelin, Pink Floyd or any other legendary name?

Bengaluru's celebrated jazz vocalist and composer Radha Thomas who first heard Eagles in the 70's when she was part of the pioneering Indian rock band 'Human Bondage', believes that there are many people, who are young (old) enough to still want to listen to the Eagles and replay the songs over and over again, causing the streaming stats to balloon.

"That's not to take away from the music which remains magical, especially the more you listen to it. There are some guitar solos that stick in your head forever. 'Hotel California' is one of them," she adds.

'Their Greatest Hits 1971-75' became a massive best-seller due to a combination of factors. The album came out just as the band was peaking, a perfect primer for new fans, with chart-toppers such as 'Take it easy', 'Peaceful easy feeling', 'Lyin' eyes', 'Tequila sunrise' and 'Witchy woman'. These songs, melodic and instantly engaging, seemed spot-on for the rise of FM radio in the '70s and '80s which according to some music critics became a staple of 'classic rock', constantly re-introducing the songs to new generations. Moreover, the album spoke to the late baby boomers who were entering adulthood in the early and mid-70s. It was a refreshing change from the music of the '60s, marked by politics and protest.

Mumbai-based music industry professional Parag Kamani believes the Eagles's status of defining the "California Sound" of the '70s with technical precision, and their success in crossing over between — and fusing — country, folk, rock and pop helped them build a massive, diverse fan base that has sustained them through the decades.

"The Eagles's ability to survive, break up, and reunite has only added to their mythos, and enduring popularity."

'Their Greatest Hits 1971-75' stood fourth on the Billboard 200 album chart upon its release. Within a month, it climbed to number one, retaining the top spot for five weeks.

Creditably, it was the first ever album to receive the RIAA's Platinum certification (introduced in 1976) and according to reports, the album has been in 'every household' at some point, becoming the fabric of American popular music.

Then, in 1980, the Eagles broke up due to conflicts between band members and creative pressures. Thankfully, the split was not a final dissolution.

They reunited in 1994 and released an album 'Hell Freezes Over' featuring new tracks — 'Love Will Keep Us Alive' and 'Get it Over'. The band went on tours within the U S and beyond, doing over 100 shows in the next two years and later released 'The Very Best of 2003' and the double album 'Long Road Out of Eden' in 2007.

In 2013 came a career-spanning documentary titled 'History of the Eagles'. It was followed by a number of tours across the U S. Commendably, they've been long enough, ensuring each new album beats the previous one.

As Kamani explains: "Creating meticulously crafted, timeless music by providing unparalleled multi-layered vocal harmonies, and the diversity in their songwriting — with each member being a composer/lyricist — captured universal themes of freedom, ambition and, in instances, the disillusionment of the American Dream. All this and more still resonates across generations and, since then, across territories."

Currently, the band is on 'The Long Goodbye' tour that will last till end of 2026 after which the band is expected to retire.

Don Henley, drummer and one of the lead vocalists of Eagles, at a 1977 show in Maryland, USA. SOURCE: EAGLES

MOVIE REVIEWS

Vijay Raghavendra in 'Raakshasa'.

Web series falls prey to OTT template

PRANATI A S

★★☆☆☆

Raakshasa

Kannada (Zee5)

Director: Suhan Prasad

Cast: Vijay Raghavendra, Mahadev Hadapad, Mayuri Kyatari

Tharun Sudhir's productions are mostly characterised by intelligent narratives without forced plot points. But 'Raakshasa' has succumbed to an OTT template in which narratives are punctuated with regular twists.

In Savadatti, near Belagavi, people live in fear of a ferocious crocodile in the Malaprabha river. The police receive many missing persons complaints but they can't prove the crocodile is behind the mystery.

When a half-decomposed body is found, its head mysteriously disappears. Sub-inspector Hanumesh (played by Vijay Raghavendra) faces immense pressure to find the head or solve the case.

Is it really the crocodile at work, or is this a murder?

Hanumesh is caught between his pregnant wife and his superiors, both demanding his attention. Meanwhile, he is convinced that the case calls for more time and attention.

The series comprises seven episodes, about 20 minutes each.

While at its core, the series is interesting, it is let down by forced 'cliffhangers' towards the end of every episode.

To add to this is Hanumesh's nagging wife Jyothi (Mayuri Kyatari). In a series billed as a psychological crime thriller, Jyothi comes across as a TV serial character; she detracts from the narrative's suspenseful nature.

The only saving grace is Mahadev Hadapad's Beera who delivers a compelling performance.

'Raakshasa' is a remake of the highly acclaimed Tamil series 'Vilangu'. What is the point of making a subpar adaptation of something already available on the same streaming platform? Doesn't it make better sense just to dub it into Kannada.

Poignant small town crime drama

PRANATI A S

★★★½☆

Second Case of Seetharam

Kannada (Theatres)

Director: Deviprasad Shetty

Cast: Vijay Raghavendra, Gopal Deshpande, Usha Bhandari

A town in Karnataka's mountainous Malnad region witnesses a series of murders. The brutality stuns everyone. The deaths follow the same pattern — severe torture before the fatal blow.

The pathologist performing the postmortem says the killer looks like a psychopath. Inspector Seetharam (Vijay Raghavendra) embarks on an adventurous investigation, and each time he thinks he has caught the killer, another body is found.

But who is the killer? Will Seetharam find him? Deviprasad Shetty builds a poignant narrative to answer these questions.

'Second Case of Seetharam' does not paint the protagonist as a super cop. He is human, makes mistakes, and even gets beaten up by the bad guys. And Raghavendra plays true to his character and delivers a compelling performance.

One can see an organic growth in Shetty's work — he has progressed from great plots with weak narratives to a crime drama with a touching story. He again reminds you how the life stories of villains are far more interesting than those of heroes. The novelist Mary Shelley said monsters emerge not from emptiness or darkness or of their own accord, but from the circumstances and wounds inflicted on them. And they show us what could happen to us if the world were to turn its back on us. Shetty's antagonist is shaped by such circumstances. He makes us root for him without justifying his crimes.

Vijay Raghavendra

It is also intriguing how the entire drama is built around the world of classical music. When a girl goes seeking art and music, she is creating a personal space for growth and self discovery. And historically, men have intruded on spaces women build for themselves. In that way, the director offers a subtle yet powerful commentary on gender and power dynamics within families and societies. And how the barbed wires look like the strings of a veena!

Unsettling portrait of a killer

ANGEL RANI

★★★☆☆

Kennedy

Hindi (Zee5)

Director: Anurag Kashyap

Cast: Rahul Bhat, Mohit Takalkar, Sunny Leone

Along the dark yet eerily vibrant streets of Mumbai, a bearded cabbie ferries his passengers through the pandemic haze. His mask conceals more than his face, deepening the mystery of what flickers behind those piercing eyes.

Minutes into 'Kennedy', the facade cracks. In graphic detail, we learn that the quiet driver is a rogue executioner who delivers death with chilling precision and without a flicker of remorse.

Operating in the shadows, Kennedy (a terrific Rahul Bhat) answers to a corrupt police commissioner (Mohit Takalkar), rattled by the pandemic's shrinking 'hafta' and desperate to keep the bribes flowing. The top cop brokers the shady deals, deciding who Kennedy must kill next.

Anurag Kashyap's craft thrives on quirks that define his characters. Here, he stages brutality in all its cinematic 'glory', arming his protagonist with a gun, a knife and, at times, a cooking pan.

'Kennedy' unfolds as a noir thriller, leading viewers towards 'THE' night through five blood-soaked nights that precede it. Each night carries its own grisly tale, with victims ranging from politicians and contractors to a random man in a wheelchair, hurled mercilessly over a balcony.

Rahul Bhat plays Kennedy.

The gruesome murders are offset by bursts of poetry and music from Aamir Aziz and Boyblanck, giving the carnage an oddly lyrical backdrop.

Sunny Leone, as Charlie, surprises in this world of wickedness, her guffaws cutting through whiskey binges.

Kennedy is a maniac who speaks through murder, but his twisted mind softens at the sight of his estranged daughter, whom he watches on surveillance cameras. It is hard to tell whether Kashyap wants viewers to sympathise with this anti-hero or surrender to the allure of a psychopath. Either way, 'Kennedy' provokes in a thoughtful, unsettling manner.

A domestic romance lost in chaos

PRANATI A S

★★☆☆☆

Maarnami

Kannada (Theatres)

Director: Rishith Shetty

Cast: Chaithra J Achar, Ritvvikk Mathad, Prakash Thuminad, Sonu Gowda

Dasara is celebrated in Mangaluru as Marnami (Tulu for Mahanavami), and tiger dance (pili vesha) is one of its main attractions. 'Maarnami' is set in this context, in a small coastal town. Chethu (Ritvvikk Mathad), a pili vesha performer, has vowed to never perform again after his mother's death. Following her death, he is raised by his uncle and aunt. Deeksha (Chaithra J Achar) enters his life and they get married. All of this is happening in the background of a gang war. Circumstances bring indifferences between the husband and wife.

Chethu performs again, breaking the vow he took as a boy. What makes him break his vow? The film follows his story.

On paper, Chaithra's character looks interesting, but despite her strong performances in the past, she comes across as loud rather than bold in this film. When she is introduced, it looks like the director had envisioned a strong character — she flirts with the boy, leaves home to marry him, and when things go wrong, she is not shy about looking at other options. But by the end of the film, everything seems to be in the man's control. There is so much blood and gore — all of it glorified as if that was the right thing to do.

Chethu grows up with simple dreams of having a big happy family, how does he end up following the path of violence and harbouring the urge to kill?

As a story, 'Maarnami' is an interesting one. However, the film is marred by a weakly written screenplay, which is all over the place. To add to this are unnecessary montages of the coastal town, which are aesthetic but don't add anything to the narrative, and a runtime close to three hours.

The only redeeming quality is Charan Raj's music — beautiful songs and a somewhat familiar background score.

Chaithra J Achar in 'Maarnami'.

Wounded Aussies sign off with Oman thrashing

PALLEKELE (SRI LANKA), PTI: Australia concluded what has been a wretched campaign with a nine-wicket thrashing of Oman in their inconsequential final group league fixture of the T20 World Cup here on Friday.

Entering the game with only pride at stake after their shocking group-stage exit following losses to Zimbabwe and Sri Lanka, seasoned leg-spinner Adam Zampa led the way with four wickets as Australia's bowlers fired in unison to bundle out Oman for 104 in 16.2 overs.

Skipper Mitchell Marsh then blazed away to an unbeaten 64 off 33 balls and Travis Head smashed 32 off 19 deliveries, as the team from Down Under completed the chase in only 9.4 overs. This is the joint fastest chase in the tournament's history for a total in excess of 100.

Marsh struck four sixes and seven fours in all, while Head found the fence six times during their rollicking 93-run partnership.

The dominant performance, however, would certainly not mask what has been a disappointing campaign, which has already led to calls for a full-scale review.

Once the bowlers did their job admirably, Marsh and Head seemed to be in a hurry, dealing in fours and sixes that left the Oman bowlers scurrying for cover.

Earlier, Zampa ended with excellent figures of 4/21, while Xavier Bartlett and Glenn Maxwell took two wickets apiece, as Oman collapsed without a fight in 16.2 overs.

Brief scores: Oman: 104 all out in 16.2 overs (Wasim Ali 32; Xavier Bartlett 2-27, Adam Zampa 4-21) lt to Australia: 108/1 in 9.4 overs (Mitchell Marsh 64 n.o., Travis Head 32).
Result: Australia won by 9 wkts.
PoM: Adam Zampa.

INDIA'S 'MIDDLING' order a concern

Batters have struggled during the consolidation phase

SIDNEY KIRAN
AHMEDABAD, DHNS

Defending champions India may have chugged along smoothly into the Super Eights of the ICC T20 World Cup with an unblemished record, but with bigger battles ahead, they will need to address their middle-overs' woes their batters are enduring if they wish to avoid any slip-ups.

Having arrived at the marquee event with nearly all their batters in blazing form, they were supposed to set the stage on fire but confounded by surprisingly challenging pitches and opposition spinners who have extracted maximum advantage with a fine cocktail of skill and smarts, they have struggled to exert their usual dominance in totality that they are accustomed to on flat tracks.

The pattern in India's four wins so far has been strong starts and blazing finishes, but the inability to force the pace during the middle overs is sticking out like a sore thumb. Let's delve into the details. In the opening game against the USA in Mumbai, where they shockingly lost four wickets inside the Power Play, they opted for consolidation thereafter, managing just 40 runs in the overs between 7 and 14.

They encountered a similar problem against minnows Namibia in New Delhi, scoring 58 runs and losing three wickets in the eight middle-phase overs. Things were better against Pakistan at the R Premadasa Stadium, where opener Ishan Kishan went berserk, the Men In Blue accruing 73 runs and losing just one wicket in the bargain. But even there, as soon as Kishan was dismissed, the run-rate took a nosedive. The pattern returned during the Netherlands in Ahmedabad, where they posted just 62 runs and lost two wickets. Their average run-rate in the middle-phase has been a modest 7.31.

The reason why the Indian batters have not been able to bat at a higher gear, apart from being faced with the reasonably challenging pitches, is how well the opposition bowlers have upped their game. While the spinners have bowled considerably slower through the air, thereby making shot-making difficult, the seamers too employ a lot of slower deliveries and back-of-a-length balls. There's hardly anything offered in the hitting zone, forcing the Indian batters to manufacture shots or take extra risks.

So the likes of Tilak Varma and skipper Suryakumar Yadav are pushed to play out of their comfort zones.

Varma has mostly adopted the anchor role just to hold one end up, while Suryakumar has tried to change the tide by shuffling around the crease or using his feet to spinners, but it's been tough sailing even for him.

So, inevitably, the duo have embraced caution with just a little bit of aggression, ensuring wickets are there for the big-hitting trio of Hardik Pandya, Shivam Dube and Rinku Singh to do all the damage at the death.

That ploy has worked with Pandya and Dube putting their hands up on different occasions, and even Suryakumar opening his shoulders once. In some ways, that was the need of the hour. But what if the finishers have a bad day in the office? It could dent India, considering there isn't room for error in Super 8s.

India are also not helped by the fact that they have an assortment of left-handed batters — nine in the squad of 15. Six of them are batters who generally start a game, giving the side an unidimensional look. Oppositions have come prepared, leaning more on finger spin to stifle them.

"You think about IPL cricket and a lot of the bilateral series, the pace of the innings seems to just carry through from the Power Play. Whereas across all the games (in this World Cup), maybe particularly in Sri Lanka, but certainly in India as well, you seem to get out of the blocks pretty quickly and then batting becomes slightly more difficult in the middle phase. Teams are getting really clever now," reckoned assistant coach Ryan Doeschate after India's win over the Netherlands on Wednesday.

"I think if we look at percentages tonight, the Dutch guys took pace off the ball a lot of the time. And obviously teams are bowling a lot of finger spin to us with so many left-handers in our line-up. That is a challenge. And I think it's going to be a differentiator in the second phase of this competition."

How India address this challenge could determine how deep they run into the tournament.

India's Tilak Varma and skipper Suryakumar Yadav (above) have struggled to force the pace during the middle overs in the ongoing T20 World Cup. PTI

Morkel praises batters' smart play

Bowling coach backs left-handers' skills against spin

Morne Morkel

SIDNEY KIRAN
AHMEDABAD, DHNS

By design or by default, India have an assortment of left-handed riches in their squad for the ICC T20 World Cup. Nine members are left-handed batters, while six of them — all likely starters — are specialists in that role. Although each of them is a genuine match-winner, their natural guard has allowed rival teams to plan better.

When asked if this poses a handicap to the defending champions, bowling coach Morne Morkel begged to differ.

"That's been sort of the makeup of the team going into the World Cup that we were going to be heavy with left-handers. That's the way we've been set up at the moment. But if you look at the left-handers, they are aggressive players. Bowlers will have sleepless nights bowling to them," said the South African before a practice session at the Narendra Modi Stadium on Friday ahead of the first Super Eights clash against his motherland.

"I do feel once we get going, we find that flow, we put bowlers under pressure. I'm sure they have been planning and will try to take the ball away from the left-handers. We have got enough skills with the guys to come up."

Arriving for the tournament on the back of a rousing five-match series against New Zealand, where balls kept flying into the stands, the Indian batters have found the going tough on tacky pitches that have made shot-making difficult. While welcoming pitches that offer something for the bowlers, Morkel praised the batters for tactical awareness for choosing to keep wickets intact through cautious batting that allowed the finishers to go berserk at the death.

"I think the most important thing is to stick to plan A by taking the spinners on. I think the smart play is also to sum up the conditions and play with those moments quite well. To be honest, I think on those surfaces we've played so far, it wasn't the easiest to get pace off the ball. We tried that in Mumbai, and found ourselves in trouble. The important thing is that we know if we have some sort of platform, we can get going. Credit to the team. Yes, we may not have dominated spin as much as we would have liked. The good thing is we are scoring well and getting close to 190s," he said.

Come Sunday, Morne will be up against his elder brother Albie, who is working as South Africa's "specialist consultant" for this tournament. When asked if he's had a chat with his sibling, both of whom have represented the Rainbow Nation with distinction, Morne said it's purely business for him.

'Certainly respect the noise back home'

PALLEKELE (SRI LANKA), PTI

Mitchell Marsh

Australia captain Mitchell Marsh on Friday said that his team respects the criticism back home after its exit from the T20 World Cup in the group stage following a shock loss to Zimbabwe and Sri Lanka.

The former champions are set to face a "forensic review" of their disappointing T20 World Cup campaign after the injury-ravaged team prematurely crashed out of the showpiece being co-hosted by India and Sri Lanka.

"Yeah, we certainly respect the noise back home when things don't quite go to plan for us as a team. We sort of know that's coming, we respect it," Marsh said before Australia's final group match against minnows Oman.

"We reflect on ways to get better moving forward. But the last couple of days, obviously, a really disappointed group to not make through the Super 8s."

Zimbabwe and Sri Lanka have progressed to the Super Eights as Australia failed to get past the group stage for the first time since 2009.

Australia, the limited overs titans with six ODI and one T20I World Cup titles, were eliminated in the group stage after Tuesday's game between Zimbabwe and Ireland in Kandy was washed out which paved the way for the much-improved African side's entry into the Super Eights from Group B along with tournament co-hosts Sri Lanka. An injury-ravaged Australia showed glimpses of their batting prowess in the first half of their innings in the loss against Sri Lanka but it was their shock defeat to Zimbabwe that really blew their campaign apart, forcing the administrators back home to announce a "forensic review" of their performance once the players return to the country.

Azam dropped for scoring too slowly: coach Hesson

COLOMBO, AFP: Batting great Babar Azam was dropped for Pakistan's final T20 World Cup group game against Namibia for scoring too slowly, said head coach Mike Hesson on Friday.

Azam, who is the highest run-scorer in T20 international history with 4,571 runs, was left out for the must-win game against Namibia as Pakistan racked up 199-3 and secured a place in the Super Eights by 102 runs.

The 2009 champions face New Zealand in Colombo on Saturday in the opening match of the second phase.

"I think Babar is well aware that his strike rate in the power play in the World Cup is less than 100 and that's clearly not the role we think we need," Hesson told reporters after Pakistan's final practice session on Friday was washed out by rain.

Pakistan left out Azam for the same reason at last year's Asia Cup and even after dismal showing in the Big Bash League, he was still selected for the T20 World Cup.

"We brought Babar back in for a specific role post the Asia Cup," said Hesson.

Kiwis brace for Pakistan spin test

COLOMBO, PTI

The New Zealand middle-order's ability to mount a strong response when faced with the guile and variety in Pakistan's spin unit will be the deciding factor when the two sides face each other in the opening Super Eight Group 2 match of the T20 World Cup here on Saturday.

The Kiwi batters are yet to hit the top gear in the ICC showpiece, except for openers Tim Seifert and Finn Allen, who have three fifties between them.

But their middle-order colleagues have not been able to back them up sufficiently, as the likes of Glenn Phillips, Rachin Ravindra, Mark Chapman and Daryl Mitchell have struggled for consistency. Phillips and Ravindra have a fifty each but they don't have anything much to show around overall.

From four matches, Ravindra has made 72 runs but 59 of them came in a single match against Canada. That they will be playing in Colombo for the first time in this tournament complicates matters further.

In contrast, Pakistan have been stationed in this port city since the beginning of the World Cup, and have already played two matches at the Premadasa.

Their bowlers, spinners to be particular, know the pace and length required to be effective on this sluggish pitch where shot-making needs more prudence than bravado.

Therefore, the New Zealand middle-order should support the Powerplay explosiveness off Allen and Seifert with a mature outing to take their side to a total of around 180 or while chasing a target in that vicinity.

Spinners -- Usman Tariq, Abrar Ahmed, Saim Ayub, Mohammad Nawaz and Shadab Khan -- give Pakistan a distinct edge, but they too have their own worries in batting.

Shadab Khan (88) is their highest run-getter after Sahibzada Farhan (220), the tournament's current top run-maker.

Pakistan batters will need to make a bigger collective contribution against an experienced outfit like New Zealand.

But none worries the Pakistan management more than Babar Azam (66 runs in four matches, strike-rate: 115.78) as the former skipper is struggling to come to terms with the demands of modern T20 batting.

If Babar stumbles one more time, then the Pakistan management might bring in someone like Fakhar Zaman, who warmed the benches throughout the group stage matches.

They will also ponder over the inclusion of left-arm pacer Shaheen Shah Afridi, who was dropped for the must-win match against Namibia.

Afridi's three wickets in as many matches have come at an economy of 11.22, evidence of his inability to employ variations on a slow pitch.

His turmoil is a lesson for New Zealand's pace-heavy attack. Lockie Ferguson, Matt Henry, Jacob Duffy and James Neesham have been borderline expensive so far, and they will have to mandatorily revisit their strategies here.

The quartet needs to use variations such as knuckle ball, slower bouncer and leg cutter, which they employed sporadically in previous matches, more often here to get an upper hand over Pakistan batters.

Tim Seifert has been the most in-form batter for New Zealand this T20 World Cup. AFP

LIVE 7 PM, STAR SPORTS

New Zealand familiar with Tariq's bowling: Chapman

COLOMBO, PTI: New Zealand middle-order batter Mark Chapman banked on the familiarity factor to tame the mystery spinner Usman Tariq-led Pakistan bowling unit in their T20 World Cup Group 2 Super 8s match here on Saturday.

Since 2024 August, New Zealand have played Pakistan in 20 bilateral matches across ODIs and T20Is, and Chapman averred that those games have given his side a good understanding of Pakistan's attack.

"Obviously, Usman Tariq has a pretty unique action with the way that he stops at the crease, so I mean that's something to factor in. But for us, Pakistan have a number of really good spinners, so each of them poses their own threat," said Chapman in the pre-match press conference here on Friday.

"So, Pakistan is one of the teams that we've played probably the most frequently over the last few years. So, we're well aware of what they're going to bring."

India vs Pakistan: Hybrid Model a logistical nightmare for Indian fans

Neutral venue option between the two leaves fans dry

SIDNEY KIRAN
AHMEDABAD, DHNS

Now that both India and Pakistan have qualified for the Super Eights stage of the ongoing T20 World Cup, the ICC, broadcasters and all associated parties would be salivating at the prospect of another clash between the two arch-rivals either in the semifinal or final early March. That would be the dream climax for them. Well, not so for the Indian fans.

With India and Pakistan agreeing on a Hybrid Model, where one of them would play all their matches in a neutral venue if the other hosted a global or continental event, it has become a logistical headache for the fans, especially when it comes to planning their travel.

Take this World Cup for example. While the Group A affair between the two nations on Feb 15 wasn't a hassle, as it was decided they would play at the R Premadasa Stadium in Colombo well in advance, it's the possibility of them either locking horns in the semifinal or the final that's going to burn a massive hole in their wallets if they wish to be at the stadium.

India have been slotted in Group 1 along with South Africa, West Indies and Zimbabwe, while Pakistan are in Group 2 with England, New Zealand and co-hosts Sri Lanka. If India top their group and Pakistan finish second, or vice versa, then the two nations will meet in the first semifinal on March 4 in Colombo. If India win that contest, then they will have to fly to Ahmedabad for the final on March 8. If India lose, or Pakistan reach the final, the title clash will be in Colombo.

If Pakistan don't make the knockouts and India advance, then Kolkata will host the first semifinal on March 4 while the Men In Blue will play in Mumbai the next day. Mumbai is also guaranteed the March 5 semifinal irrespective of what happens to either team.

The Super Eights conclude on March 1, so there's a real possibility of the fans not knowing what to do until then. And the problems are multifold. Firstly, rates of flight tickets and hotel accommodation will rise exponentially, making it unaffordable for the common man. The only option for them is to take a calculated gamble and book their tickets in advance but with a refundable option where the fares are slightly higher as compared to the non-refundable one.

With India and Pakistan agreeing on a Hybrid Model, where one of them would play all their matches in a neutral venue if the other hosted a global or continental event, it has become a logistical headache for the fans, especially when it comes to planning their travel. PTI FILE PHOTO

Even if they do that, it's still not clear whether they'll be able to get tickets for the semifinal/ final. Tickets for the semifinals and final are yet to be listed on official ticketing partner website bookmyshow.com because of the whole uncertainty surrounding the schedule. Just to draw a comparison, tickets for all matches of the upcoming FIFA World Cup -- including final -- in the US, Canada, and Mexico went on sale for the general public from December 11, 2025. In ICC events, it's understood that the host association -- associations in this case -- generally play a bigger role when it comes to ticket sales.

M Manjuanth, a PhD student at the Indian Institute of Science and a hardcore fan of the Men In Blue, lamented the situation. "My friends and I have already booked our flight tickets and accommodation to Ahmedabad because we read about the suffering many went through in 2023 when hotels were charging 10 to 20 times the normal fare. Even we struggled with travel. Return fares from Ahmedabad were so expensive, we took a train to Mumbai and flew to Bengaluru from there. But despite our travel and accommodation sorted this time, we are not sure if we will get the tickets if India reaches the final. It's a sad state, but with this hybrid model, we have no choice."

Aditya Bharadwaj, an employee with a private firm and a member of the RCB Fan Army, echoed the same concern. "I have booked refundable tickets because I'm a corporate employee, but that's not the case with many of my friends. Some of them are waiting for clarity while a few have booked their tickets in anticipation of an India final in Ahmedabad. If the final happens in Colombo, we stand to lose a lot. Airlines follow dynamic pricing, so just imagine the rates for those routes when trying to book at the 11th hour. We will have to give it a miss."

The whole World Cup is supposed to be a smooth ride for the fans, who are the heart and soul of the sport. While it is hassle free on most occasions because schedules are announced well in advance, the current arrangement has complicated their lives. A food for thought for the administrators.

Victoria Cross wins Calorific Cup

KOLKATA RESULTS

Neil Darashah-trained Victoria Cross, ridden by Suraj Narredu, won the Calorific Cup, the feature event of the Calcutta races on Friday.

1. Agostini Handiccap - 1400M: Upper Street (KH Vachha) Tejeshwar 1; Hermes (Vinod Shinde) & Amalfitana (Jagadeesh) Dht; Schwarzeneger (Farid Ansari) 4; Wb: 4, Dht, 1-1/2L. T: 1:27.12. TB: Aashay Doctor. Fav: Soul Aquarian.

2. Pa Bear Plate - 1200M: Argento (Tegbir Singh) Imran Chisty 1; Tetsu (Tejeshwar) 2; Stormchaser (Farid Ansari) 3; Knotty Nash (Suraj Narredu) 4; Wb: 7-1/4, Snk, 1L. T: 1:12.00. TB: Aashay Doctor. Fav: Fifty Shades.

3. Royal Blue Star Handicap (Div-I) - 1200M: Schoenberg (Poonawalla Racing Ltd) Suraj Narredu 1; Live It Love It (Imran Chisty) 2; Dubai Prince (Hasib Alam) 3; Godsend Divine (Farid Ansari) 4; Wb: 1/2, 4-1/4, 5L. T: 1:12.23. TB: Vijay Singh. Fav: Schoenberg.

4. Royal Blue Star Handicap (Div-II) - 1200M: Three Little Words (Mrs G.Alford) Vishal Bunde 1; Contessina (Suraj Narredu) 2; Anata Sukha (Farid Ansari) 3; Sporting Trainer (Varun) 4; Wb: 1/2, 1-1/2, 1-1/2L. T: 1:13.52. TB: Rutherford Alford. Fav: Contessina. .

5. Calorific Cup - 1200M: Victoria Cross (Ms Ameeta Mehra) Suraj Narredu 1; Morano (Imran Chisty) 2; Casha (Vishal Bunde) 3; Roman Spirit (Azaruddin) 4; Not Run: Star Concept. Wb: 4, 1L, Shd. T: 1:04.67. TB: Neil Darashah. Fav: Victoria Cross.

6. Captain Courageous Handicap-1600M: Paulite Warrior (Pranay Gupta) Suraj Narredu 1; Mrs Brando (Vishal Bunde) 2; Golbal Fashion (M.S.Deora) 3; Fortune Warrior (Gaurav Singh) 4; Wb: 2-1/2, 3/4, 1L. T: 1:39.27. TB: Neil Darashah. Fav: Paulite Warrior.

Bengaluru dividends

I race: Rs 69w; 22, 15, 28p; Fc: Rs 352; Q: Rs 286; Shp: Rs 37 & 34; Tri: Rs 2,410 & 2,410; Ex: Rs 32,828 & 14,069.

II race: Rs 21w; 14, 22, 31p; Fc: Rs 122; Q: Rs 62; Shp: Rs 72; Thp: Rs 39; Tri: Rs 553 & 210; Ex: Rs 1,975 & 396.

III Race: Rs 12w; 11, 12, 18p; Fc: Rs 23; Q: Rs 14; Shp: Rs 20; Thp: Rs 44; Tri: Rs 85 & 67; Ex: Rs 278 & 93.

IV race: Rs 42w; 10, 11, 22p; Fc: Rs 63; Q: Rs 23; Shp: Rs 38; Thp: Rs ;32. Tri: Rs 170 & 179; Ex: Rs 593 & 241.

V race: Rs 14w; 10, 10, 13p; Fc: Rs 29; Q: Rs 15; Shp: Rs 25; Thp: Rs 33; Tri: Rs 37 & 33; Ex: Rs 354 & 268.

VI race: Rs 20w; 11, 12, 18p; Fc: Rs 64; Q: Rs 33; Shp: Rs 32; Thp: Rs 51; Tri: Rs 246 & 222; Ex: Rs 1,621 & 833.

Jackpot: Rs 1, 163 (309).

Runner-Up: Rs 153 (1005). **I Treble:** Rs 299 (131). **II Treble:** Rs 333 (194).

Angelo favourite for main event

DELHI SELECTIONS

Angelo, to be ridden by Shekhawat and from the stables of S Nawab, will garner the maximum support in the Bay Of Beauty Plate, the feature event of the Delhi races to be run over a mile at the races on Saturday. The races start from 2:30 pm.

1. Juvenile Plate - 1400M: Dubai Falcon 1, Lucky Lips 2, Burning Desire 3.

2. Bay Of Beauty Plate - 1600M: Angelo 1, Lodge Keeper 2, Ashwa Pathan 3.

3. Favourite Plate (Div-I) - 1100M: Ashwa Jimbabe 1, Sunveer 2, Meridia 3.

4. Favourite Plate (Div-II) - 1100M: Telekinesis 1, Vedagarbha 2, Beat Goes On 3.

5. Rosmini Plate (Div-I) - 1200M: Robust 1, Master Multitude 2, Jet Sukhoi 3.

6. Rosmini Plate (Div-II) - 1200M: Tripurari 1, Nizbati Warrior 2, Ashwa Changez 3.

Day's best: Telekinesis.

Jackpot: 2, 3, 4, 5, 6.

Treble: 4, 5, 6.

TENNIS BENGALURU W100

Vaishnavi's run continues

India's world No. 690 slays 148th-ranked Aussie Taylah to enter semifinal

HITA PRAKASH
BENGALURU, DHNS

India's wildcard entrant Vaishnavi Adkar returns during her quarterfinal win over Australia's Taylah Preston at the SM Krishna Tennis Stadium in Bengaluru on Friday. DH PHOTO/ PRASHANTH HG

The tussle between India's wildcard entrant Vaishnavi Adkar and Australia's fourth-seeded Taylah Preston was less about hard-hitting and more about precision and placement. The one returning without missing the lines and finding the right corners enjoyed an upper hand under the bright afternoon sun at the SM Krishna Tennis Stadium here on Friday.

And at the end of a contest of fluctuating fortunes, it was the world No. 690 home girl who went for the giant kill, for the second consecutive day, to knock out the 148th-ranked Taylah and advance to the semifinal of the KPB Trust ITF Women's Open W100.

The 21-year-old from Pune, after having beaten 220th-ranked Japanese Mai Hontama the previous day in the pre-quarterfinals, scored a 6-3, 1-6, 6-4 victory over the 20-year-old Aussie in one hour and 33 minutes.

"I didn't really feel much pressure though she is a higher-ranked player because, I mean, it's not like I was playing bad," said Vaishnavi after her win.

"It's just that she started playing better and started putting more balls in. So I had to level up to her standards or even better. I took it one point at a time, without thinking about a lot of things and just kept it basic. Yeah, this is my first W100 event and reaching the semifinal at home means so much to me."

Using high balls as a ploy and keeping her serves simple and clean worked wonders for Vaishnavi in the first set despite starting on the wrong foot. A third break of serve, as opposed to two earned by Taylah, saw Vaishnavi close out the opener on her second set point.

With Taylah beginning to get into the groove, the second set completely tilted in favour of the Aussie who punished every loose ball and slowing legs of her opponent to level the match and take it to the decider.

By the time the third set reached the 3-3 mark, with two trades of breaks, it was getting increasingly hard for either player to dominate the other. As double faults, groundstroke errors and varying pace of play crept into their games, it was the tough hold by Vaishnavi in the seventh to go up 4-3 that turned the tables in her favour.

Back to simply keeping the ball in play, Vaishnavi broke Taylah's wavering serve in the eighth game to go up 5-3 before losing her own in the ninth to help Taylah inch closer 5-4 to eventually break the Australian's serve in the tenth to seal the deal 6-4.

The lone Indian in fray will take on second seed Lanlana Tararudee of Thailand who beat eighth seed Elena Pridankina 6-1, 6-3.

In another upset, top seed Talia Gibson of Australia went down 2-6, 5-7 to fifth seed Polina Iatcenko who will face third seed Hanne Vandewinkel of Belgium after her win over China's Fangran Tian 6-2, 6-2.

Results (prefix denotes seeding): Singles (quarterfinal): Vaishnavi Adkar (Ind) bt 4-Taylah Preston (Aus) 6-3, 1-6, 6-4; 2-Lanlana Tararudee (Tha) bt Elena Pridankina 6-1, 6-3; 3-Hanne Vandewinkel (Bel) bt Fangran Tian (Chn) 6-2, 6-2; 5-Polina Iatcenko bt 1-Talia Gibson (Aus) 6-2, 7-5.

Stride FC book Super Division berth with facile win

LOCAL FOOTBALL

BENGALURU, DHNS: Table-toppers Stride Sports FC confirmed their promotion to the Super Division as they defeated Rail Wheel Factory FC 4-2 in their penultimate match of the BDFA A Division League Championship here on Friday.

A brace from Imran Khan (10th, 28th) and a goal from Yohan Jacob (16th) gave Stride a 3-0 lead inside the first 30 minutes. RWF, who went out of the promotion race with the defeat, scored consolation goals through Rajesh S (50th) and Roopesh C (82nd).

Stride (34 points from 13 matches) would need just a draw from their final league match against Sniper FC on February 23 to seal the A Division title. Third-placed Technico FF (29 from 12) remain their only rival in the title race while second-placed BTM FC (29 from 13) remain in promotion run.

A Division: Stride FC: 4 (T H Imran Khan 10th, 28th, Yohan Thomas Jacob 16th, Ginneithang Gangte 60th) bt RWF FC: 2 (Rajesh S 50th, Roopesh C 82nd); Income Tax FC: 1 (Akshay KS 45th) bt Sniper FC: 0.

B Division: Group A: ADE FC: 6 (Athul Krishna PA 10th, 24th, 71st, Elangovan N 45th, Sanju R 59th, Ashish Adhikary R 61st) bt Bangalore Warriors FC: 4 (Vishal 39th, Muhammed Komath 44th og, Sham Jose 54th, G Alesius Wesley 78th); Mysore Vijayanagar FC: 3 (Jishnu H Das 9th, Shaun Kumar 13th, C Rishabh Cariapppa 51st) bt South India FC: 0.

K'taka name unchanged squad for Ranji final

BENGALURU, DHNS: Karnataka on Friday named an unchanged 15-member squad for the Ranji Trophy final against Jammu and Kashmir, which is to be played at the KSCA Rajnagar Stadium in Hubballi from Feb 24-28.

Devdutt Padikkal, who did not bat in Karnataka's second innings in the semifinals after hurting his hand, will continue to lead the side.

The eight-time champions entered the Ranji Trophy final after a 11-year hiatus.

Karnataka squad: Mayank Agarwal, KL Rahul, Aneesh KV, Devdutt Padikkal (Capt), Karun Nair, Smaran R, Shreyas Gopal, Kruthik Krishna (wk), Vidwath Kaverappa, Vidyadhar Patil, Prasidh M Krishna, Mohsin Khan, Shikhar Shetty, Shrijith KL (wk), Vyshak V.

Maier claims redemption gold

LIVIGNO (ITALY), AP

Germany Daniela Maier (front) and Switzerland's Fanny Smith during the women's skicross final in Livigno on Friday. REUTERS

Daniela Maier of Germany won the gold medal in women's skicross ahead of Swiss freeskier Fanny Smith at the Winter Olympics here on Friday.

The 29-year-old Maier, competing in her second Olympics, took an early lead in the four-woman race and protected her racing line to the bottom of the course in Livigno. She added her gold to a bronze from 2022.

Smith, 33, added her silver to two bronzes from the past two Games.

Meanwhile USA's Alysa Liu surged from third at the start of the day to win the Olympic women's singles figure skating gold on Thursday.

World champion Liu took the title ahead of Japan's Kaori Sakamoto who took silver with 17-year-old Ami Nakai winning bronze after the free skating final at the Milano Ice Skating Arena.

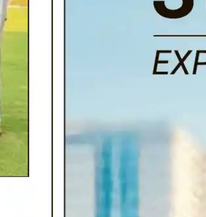
Ives crashes

World champion freestyle skier Finley Melville Ives of New Zealand is "stable and positive" following a hard fall during men's freeski halfpipe qualifying on Friday, reports AFP from Livigno.

Radha leads India A to title clash

BANGKOK, PTI

Skipper Radha Yadav **(in pic)** produced an excellent all-round effort to power India A into the final of the Women's Rising Stars T20 Asia Cup with a five-wicket victory over Sri Lanka A here on Friday.



Sri Lanka elected to bat after winning the toss, but the decision backfired spectacularly. The Indian bowlers, led by Radha, ran through the line-up to bowl them out for a paltry 118.

The left-arm spinner returned with fine figures of 4 for 19. She was ably supported by another left-arm spinner Tanuja Kanwar (2/20) and leg-spinner Prema Rawat (2/9).

For Sri Lanka, opener Sanjana Kavindi (31, 35b) offered a token fight. The Lankans were placed at 71 for two in the 10th over but could not counter the Indian spinners from that point, losing the remaining eight wickets for 47 runs in a little over nine overs.

India did not have too many moments of worry during the chase, apart from losing three wickets for 21 runs at ne stage. But with Radha making an unbeaten 31 India sauntered past the rages in 13.3 overs.

In the final, India will face the winner of the other semifinal between Bangladesh and Pakistan which will be played later in the day.

Brief scores: Sri Lanka A: 118 all out in 19.4 overs (Sanjana Kavindi 31; Radha Yadav 4-19, Prema Rawat 2-9, Tanuja Kanwar 2-20) lt to India A: 119/5 in 13.3 overs (Vrinda Dinesh 42, Anushka Sharma 27, Radha Yadav 31 not out; Shashini Gimhani 2-33). **Results:** India A won by 5 wkts. **PoM:** Radha Yadav. **India's next match:** Bangladesh A (Feb 22, final).

Proposed changes to KSRA bye-laws leave life members worried

HITA PRAKASH
BENGALURU, DHNS

An Extraordinary General Body Meeting (EGM) scheduled to be held on February 22 by the managing committee of the Karnataka State Rifle Association has caused concern and panic among its stakeholders.

The special EGM is being held to bring in changes to the Memorandum and bye-laws to ensure compliance with the new national sports code that came into effect in January this year.

However, one of the key amendments proposed states that only district associations would have the power to vote at general body meetings to elect a managing committee henceforth with the voting rights of life members taken away, leaving them a concerned lot.

"There are three registered districts - Mysuru, Chikkamagaluru and Kodagu. It does not make sense to have three registered district associations and give full responsibility for forming a managing committee in the future," Rajesh Jagdale, former secretary of KSRA told *DH*.

"90% of the Karnataka shooters are members and if these new proposals come into motion, the entire lot will be ineligible to vote for KSRA elections. The bigger issue is there is still time to implement the new sports code. Without giving clarity to the shooters about the requirements, or giving time for anybody to raise objections, this is being done. All of us got a shock out of the blue that they were going to change the whole constitution of KSRA. Such urgency is completely undemocratic, unlawful," complained Jagdale.

Voicing similar concerns was Rajesh Manpat, a life member and a shooter. "According to the legal advice we have sought from various legal councils, they say that as per Karnataka Societies Act, you cannot be a member and not have voting rights. So, if you remove the voting rights, you can no longer be a member. There are more than 1,500 life members and you are saying we cannot vote to choose our managing committee anymore? This is illegal."

Various members also brought to notice a few of the other proposed changes and termed them as dangerous. Some of them questioned the maximum age of president, secretary general and treasurer being increased to 75 years from 70 years, setting a minimum age bar of 35 years as eligibility to be on the athletes' commission and the formation of a third vice-president with two already among the 15-member committee.

Responding to the concerns, G Susheel, KSRA secretary, heading the EGM, maintained that the amendments are proposed keeping in mind the new sports code.

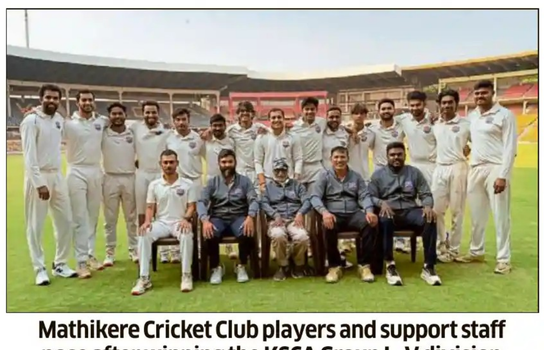
"Our parent body is the International Sports Shooting Federation (ISSF). And it says that the maximum age of president, secretary general and treasurer can be 75," said the 69-year-old Susheel.

Section 4 (2) (d) under eligibility to contest elections in the National Sports Governance Act states 70 as the default statutory age cap and 70-75 as an exception allowed only if international charters allow it and by-laws permit it. Members accused KSRA of making 75 as the norm instead of an exception only to serve certain individuals.

"About the age bar set at 35 for athletes commission nominees, you know young athletes will be still competing hard and they will not have the maturity to sit and deliberate and discuss. And third, when they are busy they may not have the time, so we said let us have a minimum age. I mean, this is our proposal and not based on the sports code. If the members feel it should be set at 30 years, we are happy to do what they want.

"And lastly, about proposing to have a third vice-president, this is to have another good person if need be. We have had people who offered to work in high positions and we couldn't give them any offers. So that was the reason we felt we could ask for another vice-president. Again, this is again called for deliberation by the members, so it is for the members to decide what they want as a majority."

Expressing displeasure, members pointed out more loopholes in organising an EGM and questioned the confusing proposals that on the surface appear to be new sports code-related but also have changes made according to one's own interest.



Mathikere Cricket Club players and support staff pose after winning the KSCA Group I - V division league cum knockout tournament for JB Mallaradhya Shield. STANDING (From left): Suraj Kamath, Nagaraj, Rahul Shetty, Keerthan, Sanjay SS, Charan, Keerthi, Rohan Shah, Nihal, Chandru Palandira Aiyanna, Praghalbha, MS Bhandage, Nischal Dega, Aditya Krishnan, Anoop. SITTING: Rahul Menon (Captain), Srikanth (Secretary), GTN Babu (President), Kiran, Ranjan (Head Coach).

Mathikere Cricket Club lift JB Mallaradhya Shield

LOCAL CRICKET

BENGALURU, DHNS: Mathikere Cricket Club defeated National Cricketers in a nail-biting final by two wickets to lift the KSCA Group I - V division league cum knockout tournament for JB Mallaradhya Shield here on Friday.

Rahul Shetty scored an unbeaten 68 off just 50 balls while chasing a modest target of 197 at the M Chinnaswamy Stadium. Sanjay SS contributed a crucial 70-run knock as Mathikere reached 199/8 in 39.1 overs despite Prasanna Patilkulkarni's spell of 4/40.

Earlier, Sharath KM could make a substantial contribution of 62 runs as the Nationals could only score 196/8 in 50 overs.

Brief scores: National Cricketers: 196/8 in 50 overs (Sharath KM 62, R Mahesh Reddy 34; MS Bhandage 2-26, Rahul Shetty 2-37, Chandru Palandira Aiyanna 2-44) lt to Mathikere Cricket Club: 199/8 in 39.1 overs (Sanjay SS 70, Rahul Menon 30, Rahul Shetty 68 n.o.; Sunil Kumar DH 3-26, Prasanna Patilkulkarni 4-40). **Result:** Mathikere CC won by 2 wickets.

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Unique oral cancer surgery saves patient's facial features

A pioneering oral cancer surgery performed at **Aster CMI Hospital**, Bengaluru, by **Dr Narayana Subramaniam**, Lead Consultant - Head and Neck Surgery & Oncology, saves the patient from a series of reconstructive procedures and the trauma of facial changes. Dr Subramaniam has performed 25 such surgeries so far, having trained in Australia

According to the National Oral Cancer Registry (an initiative of the Indian Dental Association), oral cancer accounts for nearly 40 per cent of all cancers - one of the highest proportions globally. Although many patients have tobacco or alcohol exposure, many don't, but may still develop the disease due to dental issues (chronic trauma from sharp teeth and dentures), chronic infections and post-transplant medications.

Surgery remains the most effective treatment, where the tumour is removed with a surrounding area of normal tissue, as well as the lymph nodes in the neck. However, for decades, treatment has often meant not only removing the cancer, but living with visible scars, loss of teeth and lasting difficulty with speech, eating.

Rethinking oral cancer surgery

Traditional treatment for jaw cancers involved multiple surgeries performed over months - first to remove the tumour, then to reconstruct the jaw, followed by later dental rehabilitation. The process would take a year or more and often requires repeated hospitalisations.

Modern surgical planning has transformed this pathway. Oral cancer surgery is no longer just about removing the disease. It is about restoring function, appearance and dignity in the same operation. We now avoid scars on the face almost completely for these surgeries. This involves new techniques that we have devised and published, as well as use of the surgical robot to access difficult areas like the back of the tongue, which previously needed splitting the lower jaw to reach.

Jaw-in-a-Day

Jaw-in-a-Day is a computer-assisted reconstructive procedure in which the cancerous portion of the jaw is removed, bone or soft tissue from the patient's arm or leg is used to reconstruct the jaw, dental implants are placed and a dental prosthesis is attached in a single surgery. Patients wake up with a reconstructed jaw and functional teeth - avoiding the prolonged physical and psychological impact traditionally associated with major oral cancer surgery.

Technology behind the transformation

The process begins with high-resolution CT scans of the face and leg. Using specialised software, the surgical team creates a 3D digital model of the patient's anatomy. This virtual planning allows surgeons to precisely map tumour removal, design cutting guides for exact bone shaping pre-plan implant placement, and simulate final jaw alignment before entering the operating room

Virtual surgical planning

Dr Narayana Subramaniam

allows us to visualise and rehearse the reconstruction before the first incision. It significantly improves precision and efficiency. The procedure typically takes 8–10 hours and involves a coordinated team including head and neck surgeons, reconstructive surgeons and prosthodontists.

Preserving more than appearance

Advanced jaw reconstruction is not cosmetic. It restores essential functions like chewing, swallowing, speech clarity and facial symmetry. For many patients, this determines whether they can return to work, interact socially and maintain self-confidence.

Expanding access to advanced care

Jaw-in-a-Day surgery remains available in only a limited number of specialised centres worldwide. At Aster CMI Hospital, the technique is offered to carefully-selected intermediate and advanced-stage oral cancer patients after thorough evaluation. I recently published the largest global cohort of patients who underwent this procedure for oral cancer. I have shared my expertise at national and international forums.

5 winter routines you need to change now

1 Skincare
The thick creams and oil-based moisturisers that you used in winter need to make way for light gel-based moisturisers. Thick creams can block your skin's pores and make it greasy in the warm days. Also, go in for sunscreen that's oil-free daily. Incorporate a serum with Vitamin C for more protection from the harsh summer sunrays.

2 Lukewarm bathwater
You no longer need hot showers that's so comforting in the winter days. Lukewarm water is easier on the skin and will not leave you dehydrated. Use an aloe vera or mint-based body wash with your post-gym shower. A light body lotion or gel with aloe vera is a good idea as the days get warmer. It keeps your skin hydrated.

3 Hydrating foods
A typical winter meal is heavy with carbohydrates and warming foods. It's time to switch to lighter meals that are rich in hydration. Fruits such as watermelon, salads rich in protein, yogurt and hydrating fluids such as tender coconut water need to be a part of your daily diet. Avoid excessive deep fried finger foods.

4 Exercise time
Winter means punishing routines in the gym. Morning and evening walks aren't taxing in the chilly weather. Come summer and it's different. You sweat more and your body will not be able to take the same vigorous work-outs. Switch your work-out time to cooler parts of the day – early morning or after sunset. Swimming is a good option now. Increase consumption of water through the sessions.

5 Attire: Balance comfort and style
Choose fabrics that are comfortable. Light shades and breathable fabrics such as cotton and linen keep you comfortable through the hot months. This isn't a good time for layering. Baggy fits that are airy is the key to long, hard days without feeling sticky. A hat and sunglasses are essential accessories if you are outdoors for long spells.

Transcanal nerve surgery reverses facial palsy

A difficult facial nerve decompression surgery performed by **Dr Bijjal Raj**, Consultant ENT and Micro Ear Surgeon, **Sagar Hospitals**, saved the day for an accident victim who lost his facial movements. A road accident led to a severe compression of his facial nerves leaving him unable to blink his eyes and move his lips. He even lost his sense of taste. Turning to Sagar Hospitals restored his facial movements and put him on the road to complete recovery

When his motorbike was hit by a car, 24-year-old K V Likith had no idea that everything he had taken for granted would change. The accident caused his temporal bones to shatter and fragments pressed against the facial nerves, compressing them so severely that they ceased to function. He could not shut his eyes at all or even blink. The result was post-traumatic facial palsy where the muscles on one side of his face fell slack, his lips would not move and even the simple reflex of closing his eyelids became impossible. Likith lost sense of taste too.

Weeks of physiotherapy brought little relief. He then came to Sagar Hospitals. After examination and imaging, he was diagnosed with post-traumatic Grade VI lower motor neuron facial palsy. Likith was advised to undergo surgery immediately.

The proposed surgery was a transcanal facial nerve decompression so the pinched nerves function like before. The four-hour surgery was done through the patient's ear canal. Nerves are very fragile, so it was an extremely delicate operation.

Transcanal facial nerve surgery is a procedure where the surgeon reaches the facial nerve through the ear. By going through the ear, the surgeon can access the nerve in a more direct and less invasive way, which may mean less visible scarring and sometimes a quicker recovery. This is not a common operation and requires specialised training.

The effect was immediate. Within hours of the surgery, Likith could close his eyes fully for the first time since the accident. He was visibly relieved. He was discharged the following day and continues to attend physiotherapy sessions

Dr Bijjal Raj

to encourage the gradual return of movement in the other facial muscles, a process that may take up to two months. For Likith, the restoration of such ordinary functions is anything but ordinary. He also realises the importance of wearing a good quality helmet while riding a two-wheeler. His gratitude is evident when he says he found the "best doctor" at Sagar Hospitals. "Dr Bijjal Raj is not only skilled, but reassuring. That made all the difference", he says.

For enquiries: 95919 96416

- The accident led to fracture of facial bones and bone fragments compressing facial nerves severely
- Muscles on one side of face went slack with no movement. It became impossible to close eyelids, move lips. Sense of taste was lost
- Physiotherapy alone did not bring much relief. The talented surgeon at Sagar Hospitals, Dr Bijjal Raj, decompressed the nerves and gave the victim another lease of normal life

'Preventive care at Bangalore Hospitals is life-saving...'

Bangalore Hospitals – Jayanagar offers state-of-the-art preventive care along with holistic treatment for optimum outcomes. **Dr Lahari Surapaneni**, Consultant Plastic and Reconstructive Surgeon and CEO, **Bangalore Hospitals Group**, explains how technology and talent come together to ensure seamless and personalised preventive care and timely treatment for quick and complete recovery, in this conversation with **Jayanthi Madhukar**

How important is preventive care? How does Bangalore Hospitals make a difference?
Preventive care is crucial. We offer specialised preventive services that detect life-threatening diseases before the onset of symptoms. For example, you may not feel a lump in the breast until it grows to over one cm. Invariably, a patient consults a doctor only when the lump reaches 2-3 cm and becomes noticeable. Our advanced CT/MRI protocols detect abnormalities as small as 0.1 cm, identifying cancers even before a person knows they exist.

When detected early, a tumour can often be removed surgically without the need for additional treatments such as chemotherapy or radiation. This approach also preserves breast tissue, frequently eliminating the need for complete removal. The chances of preventing spread and ensuring disease-free survival increase significantly. Treatment costs are lower as well.

The same principle applies to cardiac care. At Bangalore Hospitals, we treat a heart attack like cancer, focusing on early detection. We have India's first-of-its-kind 640-slice Cardiac CT scan, cleared for annual CT coronary angiograms. It is among the quickest cardiac imaging systems available, performing a three-second scan using minimal contrast and radiation as compared to other machines in India. It shows all the blood vessels of the heart and identifies any blockages.

In the case of a 20–30 per cent blockage, treatment or lifestyle modifications can often reverse the condition. The scan can be repeated annually to monitor whether plaque has progressed or regressed. This is far better than arriving at the hospital with breathlessness and having to decide on a stent or bypass surgery as a life-saving emergency.

What does your preventive care package offer?
We offer BH Prevent (Bangalore Hospitals Prevent). After studying packages available elsewhere, we designed a programme that addresses existing gaps. A challenge with conventional packages was that none was truly comprehensive. We could rarely advise patients with complete clarity based solely on limited reports. Often, budget constraints meant only basic tests were included, leaving patients without a full understanding of their health.

BH Prevent is a specialised package that includes a full-body MRI scan. It provides preventive evaluation for the entire body and is completed in just 38 minutes. It also includes a CT coronary angiogram, a three-second scan that detects blockages.

As tests are conducted, our specialists review the results immediately in consultation with dedicated whole-body and cardiothoracic radiologists. If a tumour or cardiac blockage is detected, the specialist concerned reaches out promptly. Everything is integrated into a seamless programme.

Our programme offers comprehensive health and wellness evaluation, including bone density, fat composition, muscle mass and family history assessment. We incorporate genetic parameters, genetic testing, tumour markers, mineral and vitamin levels, and detailed blood investigations. It is a 360-degree evaluation of health, followed by personalised medical guidance.

Age-specific screenings are also included. For instance, individuals over 40 may require a colonoscopy once every 10 years and annual breast imaging. With this package, patients leave with complete clarity about their health condition.

How does your 640-slice CT scan help?
The 640-slice CT scan performs whole-body imaging and cardiac angiography. It evaluates the entire skeletal system, all lymph nodes, organ vascularity - particularly important for the brain, neck and major vessel aneurysms and supports early identification of peripheral vascular disease/stroke.

It assesses blood flow to all organs, including the hands and feet, helping detect complications arising from hypertension and diabetes.

The MRI scan detects solid organ tumours and soft tissue changes, including muscular abnormalities and lesions across organs such as the brain, thyroid, neck, breast, chest wall, abdomen, ovaries, bowel, rectum and prostate.

How is your hospital dealing with cardiac health?
We were among the first in the United States, at our sister hospital, and are now doing the same in India, to introduce a structured cardiac prevention programme aimed at reducing cardiac-related deaths among the youth. Our Director of Cardiac Sciences, Dr C M Manjunath, is deeply committed to improving cardiac health before a disaster strikes.

Our Heart 360 Package includes a CT coronary angiogram that images the inside of blood vessels, since any blockage compromises blood flow to the heart muscle. We also perform a CT calcium score to detect calcium build-up within vessels.

The 640-slice CT scan provides details about plaque type, location and consistency, helping cardiologists determine whether a balloon procedure is essential or whether a rotational blade intervention is required.

We conduct 24-hour Holter monitoring to evaluate heart rhythm and perform treadmill stress tests to assess cardiac performance under exertion and detect symptoms. An echocardiogram evaluates blood flow between chambers, identifies lesions or blood clots, and detects valve or septal defects.

At Bangalore Hospitals, our packages are designed from a doctor's perspective so patients can leave informed, reassured and confident about their health.

Dr Lahari Surapaneni
Consultant Plastic Surgeon and CEO
Bangalore Hospitals

The 640-slice CT-3T MRI system is capable of detecting tumours before they become symptomatic and identifying cardiac artery blockages before they cause a heart attack.

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DH DECCAN HERALD
Wknd. ADVENTURE

Your diet needs to be protein-rich through the trek. Carry energy-boosting foods such as energy bars and dates for a quick-fix snack on the way

EAT RIGHT

WEEKEND LIFESTYLE FEATURE

HANDY HINTS FOR TREKKERS

Research the route thoroughly – altitude, how difficult it is, distance and weather conditions. Ensure you have the fitness to make it up and back. Double check if you are carrying all the essentials you will need. Start as early as possible and give yourself enough time to finish before it gets dark.

DRESS FOR THE TREK

Your attire and footwear are crucial. Get to know the sort of protection from the weather you need and get suitable clothing – light or heavy. Your footwear needs to keep you comfortable and give you a strong grip while on the slopes. Take advice from an expert on your gear and check them thoroughly before setting off.

What makes Rhododendron treks so popular?

'Bloom window' is short: The flowering lasts barely 4–6 weeks, between February and March. Miss it, and you have to wait for another year.

Ideal weather: February–March means clear Himalayan views, less monsoon mud, fewer crowds compared to peak summer and snow still visible at higher altitudes.

Stunning vistas: The deep red rhododendron forests contrast dramatically against pristine white snow peaks and blue skies. Many treks also create awareness about the alpine ecology and biodiversity of this region.

Moderate trek: Most rhododendron treks are accessible to beginners and intermediate trekkers, making them ideal for spring adventure seekers of all ages.

Five major rhododendron trek routes

1 Chopta-Tungnath-Chandrashila (Uttarakhand)
Altitude: Around 12,000 feet (Chandrashila summit)
Bloom period: Late March
Why special: Forest trails filled with red rhododendrons (locally called Buransh)
Bonus: Panoramic views of Nanda Devi, Trishul and Chaukhamba peaks
Trek: Easy to moderate. It is known as a beginner's trek

2 Dayara Bugyal (Uttarakhand)
Altitude: Around 11,800 feet
Bloom period: March
Why special: Rhododendron forests during ascent before reaching open meadows
Trek: Easy to moderate

3 Singalila Ridge and Sandakphu (West Bengal-Sikkim Border)
Altitude: Around 12,000 feet
Bloom period: March–April
Why special: Diverse rhododendron species and views of Kanchenjunga peak
Unique feature: Walking along the India-Nepal border
Trek: Moderate

4 zongri Trek (Sikkim)
Altitude: Around 13,000 feet
Bloom period: April (lower slopes bloom earlier)
Why special: Dense forests of rhododendron and magnolia
Wildlife: Red panda habitat
Trek: Moderate to difficult

5 Tawang Region Treks (Arunachal Pradesh)
Altitude: 11,000 feet
Bloom period: March–April
Why special: Rare rhododendron species in high-altitude terrain
Experience: Remote, culturally-rich, monastery-dotted landscapes
Trek: Moderate to difficult

When the Himalayas BLOOM IN RED

The forests and meadows in the Himalayan ranges come alive with rhododendron blooms this time of the year for a short while. **Swatee Jog** takes you on this amazing trek

If you are prone to be pulled by the Valley of Flowers National Park or the Kaas Plateau near Satara in Maharashtra to see the blooms, you must read on. For a few magical weeks between late February and early April, parts of the Himalayas turn into living paintings. The snow has begun to ease, but the air remains chill. And forests that stood silent through winter suddenly erupt in brilliant shades of crimson, pink, white and purple. Welcome to the world of rhododendrons, a keystone species of brightly coloured, fragrant and ornamental flowers found in high altitude areas.

Dozens of species of this flower bloom across Uttarakhand, Himachal Pradesh, Sikkim and Arunachal Pradesh, making for a perfect trek option. Rhododendron treks have become one of the most sought-after seasonal experiences in north India, blending mild weather, floral spectacle and moderate trekking conditions.

Species you find here

India hosts over 100 species of rhododendrons, many in the eastern Himalayas.

Some of the species you can see here:
- Rhododendron arboreum
- Rhododendron barbatum
- Rhododendron campanulatum
- Rhododendron niveum
- Rhododendron thomsonii

Each one blooms at slightly different altitudes - which means as you ascend, the colours subtly change.

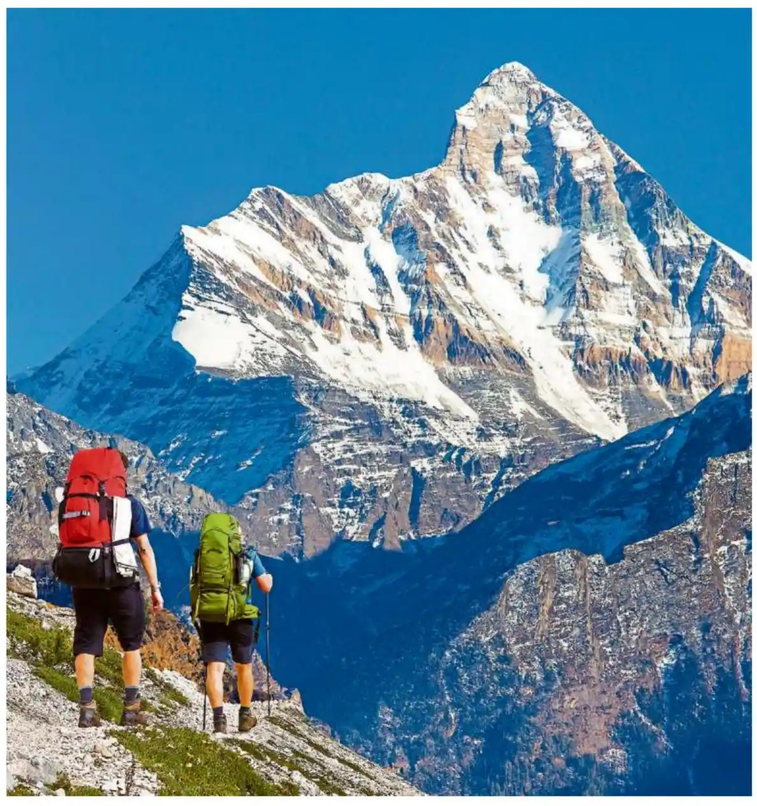
Preparation needed for a rhododendron trek

Though spring is milder, Himalayan conditions remain unpredictable. You need cardio fitness and strong legs, thermal clothes and appropriate footwear. Responsible trekking is the key to enjoy this experience.

There is something deeply satisfying about walking through the mountainous forests and meadows, and coming into bursts of red flowers against grey trunks and white peaks.

Rhododendron treks are becoming a ritual for many - a way to greet spring not in cities, but in the high Himalayas where Nature showcases the season in its most dramatic way.

For a few weeks every year, the mountains wear red. And those who witness it never forget it.



LEISURE

Beetle Bailey

I'D LIKE TO SEE THE GENERAL
HE WON'T SEE YOU
ARE YOU SURE?
NO FUZZ ZONE
GENERAL HALFTRACK
NO FUZZ!
GREG + MORT WALKER
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JUMBLE

THAT SCRAMBLED WORD GAME
By David L. Hoyt and Jeff Knurek

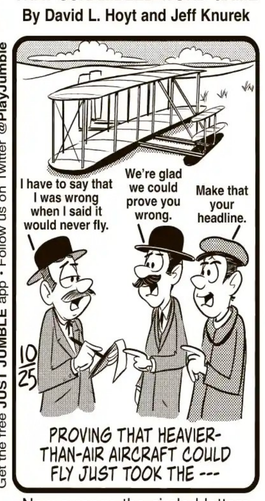
Unscramble these Jumbles, one letter to each square, to form four ordinary words.

REETX

SABHR

WHRGOT

OTTPIE


I have to say that I was wrong when I said it would never fly.
We're glad we could prove you wrong.
Make that your headline.
10 25
PROVING THAT HEAVIER-THAN-AIR AIRCRAFT COULD FLY JUST TOOK THE ---

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Now arrange the circled letters to form the surprise answer, as suggested by the above cartoon.

"_____" _____

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Answers

Proving that heavier-than-air aircraft could fly just took the — "RIGHT" BROTHERS

EXERT BRASH GROWTH TIPTOE

HITORI-134

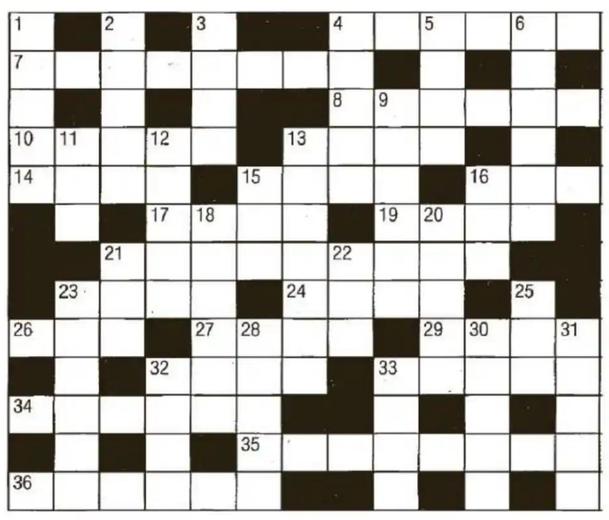
6	2	5	7	3	3	4	3
4	3	3	2	1	5	3	6
1	5	2	6	3	7	8	4
5	8	3	8	5	3	2	7
5	6	3	3	6	8	7	3
8	3	7	4	2	6	7	5
3	7	4	8	6	4	1	3
7	2	8	5	3	1	3	3

SOLUTION for HITORI-134

■	3	1	■	5	8	2	7
3	1	4	6	8	■	7	■
5	■	6	2	4	7	■	8
■	7	8	■	3	■	6	5
7	2	■	5	■	3	■	8
4	8	7	3	6	2	1	5
6	■	5	1	2	■	3	4
■	4	3	■	7	5	■	6

To solve the puzzle: Eliminate numbers by filling in squares so that remaining cells in that row or column do not repeat that number more than once. Filled-in cells cannot be horizontally or vertically adjacent. The un-filled cells must form a single component connected horizontally and vertically.

CROSSWORD CHALLENGE 135



EASY

ACROSS
4 Pointed beard (6)
7 Food of the gods (8)
8 Hang around (6)
10 Change (5)
13 Difficult (4)
14 Eager (4)
15 Facility (4)
16 Farmyard bird (3)
17 Thin mud (4)
19 Acquire (4)
21 Absurd (9)
23 Touch (4)
24 Suspend (4)
26 Beseech (3)
27 Level (4)
29 Second-hand (4)
32 Gravel (4)
33 Storage container (5)
34 To badger (6)
35 Doomed (3-5)
36 Respectable (6)

DOWN
1 Canoe-like boat (5)
2 Subside (5)
3 Sixty minutes (4)
4 Festive occasions (5)
5 Among (4)
6 Number (6)
9 American state (6)
11 Star sign (3)
12 Follow (5)
13 Short axe (7)
15 Biblical priest (3)
16 Belonging to him (3)
18 Loafers (6)
20 Bode (5)
21 Limb (3)
22 Managed (3)
23 Of a woman (6)
25 Favourite (3)
28 Call on (5)
30 Pan-fry (5)
31 Actions (5)
32 Fixed look (4)
33 Sleeve part (4)

CRYPTIC

ACROSS
4 Catherine showed us the way on a road (6)
7 Where all that ice can be broken with ease (5,3)
8 Du Maurier's hat had character! (6)
10 Cut with an oblique stroke (5)
13 She leaves the sheep after we sadly cry (4)
14 Rubbish may be shot here (4)
15 Is interrupting a player with imperfect speech (4)
16 Much loved trumpet piece (3)
17 Regards as a noted agreement (4)
19 A police department that's sharp (4)
21 Shooting brake (5-4)
23 Sound of the engine when you turn up with a posh car (4)
24 Roman sea-horse? (4)
26 Innovatory tax? (3)
27 Of undiluted cleverness (4)
29 Be sentimental in Oslo, perhaps (4)
32 Not all little angels are sylph-like (4)
33 In rock, various notes are used (5)
34 They're undrinkable (6)
35 Judge I'm in the centre of the property (8)
36 Make disclosures about meat (6)

DOWN
1 Do the dance (5)
2 Royal maids, possibly (5)
3 Net used in some shark-infested waters (4)
4 Dislikes undue haste (5)
5 Cause pain in a cow's tail joint (4)
6 Deprived a chap of somewhere to sleep (6)
9 Go again at the double! (6)
11 At Wimbledon, it can lead to a smash (3)
12 She has hesitation in describing fine stockings (5)
13 Sage and worldly character (4,3)
15 The French man (3)
16 Something harpies have to eat (3)
18 Told tales in randy fashion about an egghead (6)
20 Charlie comes to rest on top (5)
21 Economy in execution (3)
22 Being overweight, father dispenses with her (3)
23 Promise of freedom? (6)
25 Hedonistic fellow? (3)
28 It lends support to an artist's views (5)
30 All upset about a blob at the close of play, it's true (5)
31 Chap run out? (5)
32 Survive terrible evil (4)
33 Reputed to help on starting school (4)

SOLUTIONS TO CROSSWORD CHALLENGE 135

CRYPTIC
ACROSS: 4, How-a-Rd. 7, White Sea 8, Trilby 10, Slash 13, We-ep 14, Tosh 15, L-is-P 16, Pet 17, E-yes 19, A-CID 21, Cease-fire 23, Pu-RR 24, Mare 26, VAT 27, Neat 29, Slop 32, Lean 33, Stone 34, Solids 35, Est-I'm-ate 36, Re-veal.
DOWN: 1, Twist 2, Midas 3, Mesh 4, Hates 5, W-hip 6, Rob-bed 9, Re-pair 11, Lob 12, She-er 13, Wise man 15, Les 16, Pie 18, Varn-e-d 20, C-rest 21, Cut 22, Fat 23, Parole 25, Don 28, Easel 30, L-O-y-al 31, Peter 32, Live 33, S-aid. Sauté 31, Deeds 32, Gaze 33, Cuff.

EASY
ACROSS: 4, Goatee 7, Ambrosia 8, Loiter 10, Alter 12, Hard 14, Keen 15, Ease 16, Hen 17, Silt 19, Gain 21, Ludicrous 23, Feel 24, Hang 26, Beg 27, Even 29, Used 32, Grit 33, Crate 34, Harass 35, Ill-fated 36, Decent.
DOWN: 1, Kayak 2, Abate 3, Hour 4, Galas 5, Amid 6, Eleven 9, Oregon 11, Leo 12, Ensue 13, Hatchet 15, Ell 16, His 18, Idlers 20, Augur 21, Leg 22, Ran 23, Female 25, Pet 28, Visit 30.

Wknd. TREND

Wear your hat with confidence. It shows if you are uncomfortable in it

HEAD HIGH

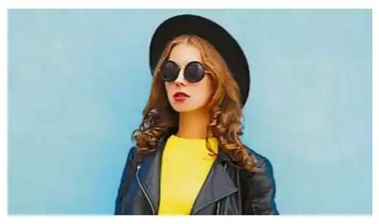
WEEKEND LIFESTYLE FEATURE

TEXTURE ADDS DIMENSION

If you have a collection of hats for summer, pick a couple with textures. They add a dimension to your ensemble. Ribbed knits and materials such as corduroy or suede give your outfits depth, especially when they are formal and in subdued shades. Don't overwhelm textures with accessories.

BLEND WITH HAIRSTYLE

A hat needs to complement your hairstyle. While some fit better with a close-cropped hairstyle, others suit volume. A neat hairstyle accommodates any hat. Try it on before you go for it. You can choose similar fits in different shades and textures for your outfits. Ensure the colour combination is right.



Hat Trick

Collection time

The summer is around the corner and it's time to pull out your hats. If you don't have a collection, why not put together one for this season. A hat can make a fashion statement too. It's the right time to plan your summer wardrobe including accessories. And a hat is a must-have in the hot summer Bengaluru is getting used to.

Shape and fit

The hat needs to be comfortable and suit your face at the same time. A sharp cut hat with a wide brim suits a round face. A bucket hat goes well with a long face as it balances the length. Softer and more curvy fits are a good option for those with a squarish face. The hat needs to complement your face in shape and size.

PROPORTION IS THE KEY

Never go for an over-sized hat or something that sits small on top of your head. A large hat will overwhelm a small frame. Also, you don't want the hat to distract attention from your ensemble. The hat needs to fit in with the rest of the attire – not work as a centrepiece.

COORDINATE COLOURS

A black or navy blue hat is a standard that goes with any coloured outfit. But, bold colours such as crimson or bottle green that make a statement will clash with other bright colours. They are ideal for outfits in pastel shades. You need to ensure your hat matches with, or contrasts elegantly with, your outfit.

The Indian summer wardrobe is about breathable structure, sun-conscious colours and fabrics with a heritage, writes **Prasad Bidapa**

Textiles that tell stories for summer

Fashion Notes

Indian summers are not a mood - they are a season of survival. With temperatures soaring beyond 35 degrees in many cities, dressing well becomes less about trend and more about intelligent textile choices. The answer lies where it always has - in our own craft heritage.

Natural, breathable fabrics are non-negotiable. Handwoven cottons from Bengal, airy Kota Doria, fine Mulmul, linen-cotton blends and indigenous silks like Chanderi allow airflow while absorbing moisture. Unlike synthetic fast-fashion fabrics that trap heat, handlooms regulate body temperature. Organic dyes and vegetable-based pigments reduce skin irritation.

Climate-friendly dressing is not merely aesthetic - it is ethical. Supporting handloom clusters reduces carbon footprint, preserves water-conscious dyeing methods and sustains artisan livelihoods. Traditional techniques such as block printing use hand-carved wood blocks and natural pigments, ensuring low-impact production. Kalamkari, with its narrative hand-drawn motifs using vegetable dyes, offers wearable art rooted in history. Tie-dye traditions like Bandhani from Gujarat and Rajasthan are not just festive - they are lightweight, breathable and movement-friendly for summer.

International trends can be adapted intelligently rather than copied blindly. Global fashion currently embraces over-sized silhouettes, relaxed tailoring and artisanal surfaces. Instead of polyester co-ord sets, consider a handloom cotton over-sized shirt paired with tailored linen trousers. Replace synthetic summer dresses with block-printed trapeze silhouettes. A Bandhani scarf can update a neutral Western outfit.

Craft is not costume, it is context.

Colour, too, should flatter Indian styles rather than follow seasonal diktats from Europe. Earthy terracotta, turmeric yellow, indigo, sindoor red, dusty rose, emerald and off-white complement warmer tones beautifully. Pastels work best when slightly muted rather than icy.

The Indian summer wardrobe is therefore not about excess. It is about breathable structure, sun-conscious colour and textiles that tell stories. When we choose handloom, natural dyes and regionally-rooted crafts, we are not being nostalgic. We are being intelligent and stylish in a way that belongs to our climate and our cultural memory.

PHOTOGRAPHER: JITEN AGARWAL

Event: Vastra Veda - Handloom Heritage of India
Designer: Rta Kapur Chishti
Model: Amrutha Prashanth

Event: Vastra Veda - Handloom Heritage of India
Designer: Nivedita
Model: Divyain Singh

Event: Vastra Veda - Handloom Heritage of India
Designer: Zubair Kirmani
Model: Eloysa Eduarda

Fit loose!

It's in getting the combo right, says **Shilpi Madan**

Style File

Feel like trying out the boyfriend jeans or the boxy blazer? Unsure of being able to carry off the look? Here is your handy guide to carrying off the loose fits with elan.

Get the combo right

If you are picking a baggy fit in pants or jeans, opt for a form fitting top. Too much volume adds bulk to your entire frame. For the well-built, a snug fit on top pairs well with a loose bottom. A petite frame carries the over-sized fit effortlessly.

Make it work

Flaunt a slim waistline with a cropped top teamed with baggy jeans. Jeggings that end above the ankle couple beautifully with a super-sized shirt. Work in the waist with cuts around the abdomen to add to your height.

Go minimalist

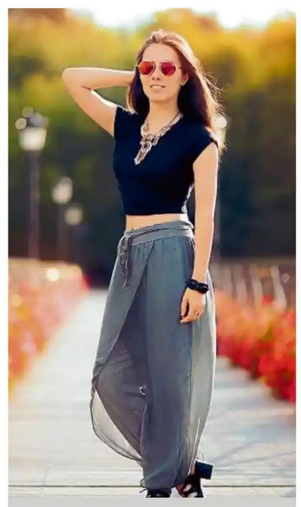
Avoid carrying suitcase-sized bags and backpacks. They add to the bulk. Cross straps, totes and slings work best. Sneakers with loose pants team up well.

Skip the slide

If you are heavy-built, avoid the over-sized fit in tops in fabrics that gather. For instance, a chiffon, lace or georgette is a great pick as opposed to a thick corduroy shirt.

Fit it well

Make use of a belt to hold your jeans and pants in place. Else you will end up looking sloppy and unkempt, pulling them up every now and then.



Get the look

- Raid your father's vintage collection, brother's shirts and T-shirts to try out the look
- Team up a loose fit pick with a well-structured cut to balance the look
- Choose accessories in keeping with the chilled out style

Style for the hot days

Jayanthi Madhukar lists out three accessories you need for a stylish summer

Summer Ready

Even though summer officially begins later, the days are already getting warmer and drier. We recommend three essentials you will need for summer and on days that feel like summer.

Sunglasses

There is something effortlessly trendy about wearing sunglasses as they instantly make you feel 'put together'. As a fashion accessory, sunglasses are versatile and can completely transform your look.

This season, we expect to see a range of styles, from large, over-sized frames to wiry designs and cool tinted shades. Black sunglasses with bold frames are classic and pair well with designer outfits and streetwear alike.

You can't go wrong with this style, whether you prefer small or over-sized glasses. Bold, black frames also look great when worn as spectacles, giving the wearer a stylish appeal.

Large, oversized frames are an attitude you wear just how fashion should be worn. This style has dominated global fashion runways and is often seen with opaque, translucent or clear lenses. Wear them whenever you want to add dramatic flair to your look. You can also opt for technicolour lenses, ranging from light pastels to warm browns, to elevate your style.

Water bottle

Summer is all about hydration, so make sure to carry a water bottle with you. A reusable bottle that is both good-looking and functional is essential not only to stay hydrated but also to add a touch of style to your day.

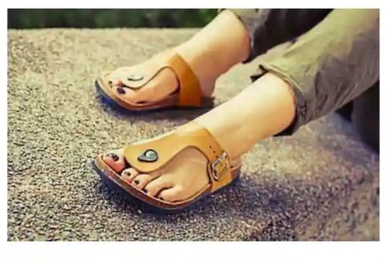
We recommend an insulated metal water bottle because it effectively keeps water cool and refreshing. Choose a colour that pops out because it is a clever way to ensure you won't forget it. Whether you prefer a screw-top lid or a sipper is a matter of personal style, however, a sturdy metal lid is more durable than a plastic one.

Summer sandals

On a hot day, your feet need air just as much as you do. Sandals, whether flats or heels, are a stylish and essential part of any warm-weather outfit. Pair them with shorts or slip dresses for an effortless vacation vibe.

Opt for leather sandals with wide straps for a luxe feel or choose slender braided slingbacks for a delicate silhouette. If you prefer something less restrictive, crossover slides offer comfort and security while remaining easy to walk in.

Natural materials are always a good choice for added comfort.



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THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

WEEKEND LIFESTYLE FEATURE

QUALITY SLEEP IS CRUCIAL

You need a least seven hours of sound sleep daily to maintain your concentration through the days. You cannot concentrate for long hours and delve into difficult subjects if you are sleep-deprived. Resist the temptation to watch stuff that does not add value on your phone late into the night.

NUTRITIOUS DIET HELPS

This is the time to avoid junk food. Balanced diet and healthy snacks help you stay high on energy and maintain focus. Include fruits, whole grains, nuts and yogurt in your daily diet. Consult a dietician for a meal plan that boosts brain health and memory.

Reading Room

Study season

The exam season is here. And it is stressful for both students and parents. While distractions are many more these days than when parents were school students themselves, more opportunities beckon too. Acing the exams is no rocket science. It can be done with some systematic preparation.

BEGIN EARLY

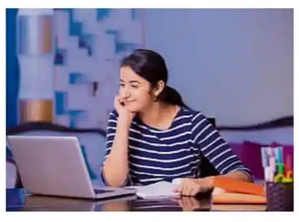
The key to retention is starting early and taking time to understand the concepts. Cramming in the last minute is never a good idea and much of what is memorised many not be retained. Create a systematic schedule a month before the exams and stick to it. Give time to understand and recollect class lessons.

SCHEDULE SESSIONS

Make a timetable of daily study sessions. Break up subjects into many sessions through the day. Many short sessions with small breaks in between are better than a couple of lengthy ones. You tend to lose focus after some time if you don't take a break.

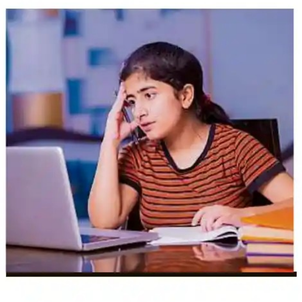
Time management

A critical resource during the exam season is time. You cannot afford to waste time. Avoid unnecessary distractions that are time consuming. Keep a check on time spent on different activities through the day and ensure none eat into your study time. Setting aside specific time slots for daily chores and sticking to them helps.



PRIORITISE SUBJECTS

Set aside more time for subjects that are challenging or test your more. It will also help if you schedule these topics for the morning slots when you are in peak concentration. Avoid putting them away for later as they don't interest you. Conquering them will encourage you.



Protein-packed bowl to see you through the morning

Do you skip breakfast because you don't find the time to cook amidst the morning rush? Clinical dietitian **Jahnavi Bhograj** has a simple and nutrition-dense solution

Eat Right

On busy days when there is little time to prepare an elaborate meal, many families look for something that is refreshing, yet healthy, tasty and filling. Skipped breakfasts often show up later as mid-morning fatigue or irritability, especially when there is a long gap before the next meal.

A balanced breakfast that comes together quickly can make mornings easier and more settled. This fruit-and-yogurt breakfast bowl is one such option. It is high in protein, easy to prepare and enjoyed by both adults and children.

Inspired by global breakfast bowls but adapted to Indian kitchens, it uses familiar, locally available fruits such as banana, chikoo, papaya, mango and jamun. Paired with curd or Greek yogurt and a small amount of coconut milk, the bowl feels creamy and comforting without being heavy. Seeds and a low-sugar granola add texture and nourishment, making it practical for busy weekdays and different enough to feel like a welcome change on weekends or holidays.

Here's how you make it:

What you need

One cup of mixed local fruits (banana, chikoo, papaya, mango or seasonal fruits and mixed berries)

Half a cup of thick yogurt, Greek yogurt or coconut yogurt

Quarter cup of unsweetened coconut milk

One tablespoon of hemp seeds or soaked chia seeds (optional, but recommended)

Unsweetened roasted coconut shavings (just a few for a tasty crunch)

Two tablespoons of low-sugar granola

Preparation

Blend the fruits, yogurt and coconut milk until thick and smooth. Pour into a bowl. Top with hemp seeds or soaked chia seeds if using, coconut shavings and granola. Serve immediately.

Topping options

Small additions can change the flavour and nutrition profile without altering the structure of the meal. Chopped dates add natural sweetness, while unsweetened peanut butter adds richness and extra protein. A small amount of dark chocolate turns the bowl into an occasional treat.

For those with higher protein needs, a spoon of plain, unsweetened plant-based pea protein can be blended into the base without affecting taste or texture. On warmer days or for young children, fresh fruit sorbet can replace blended fruit for a cooling variation.

Healthy breakfasts do not need to be perfect to be effective. When meals rely on familiar foods and allow flexibility, they are more likely to become habits. This is the kind of breakfast that is easy enough to try once this weekend and practical enough to return to often.

Nutrition-rich breakfast

From a nutrition perspective, this bowl works because it is balanced. Yogurt and hemp seeds provide a steady supply of protein, which helps keep hunger levels stable and often carries energy comfortably until lunchtime.

Fruits supply carbohydrates in their natural form, offering energy without the sharp spikes associated with refined sugars. Coconut milk and seeds contribute healthy fats, which slow digestion slightly and improve satiety. Fibre from fruits, seeds and granola supports digestion and keeps the meal light, yet filling.

Glow on through the summer months

Shilpi Madan explains how you can beat the effect of warm days on your skin

Skin Care

The weather shifts and the spots on the skin begin to creep in. It isn't a happy development, but before you start blaming the AQI, correct your daily skin cleansing routine to work in the self-care benefits.

Here are some tips:

Mild cleanser

Make use of a mild foaming facewash to splash away the germs from your skin. Make-up wet wipes work in a jiffy when you are travelling or on the run, but you must follow up with a good facewash to leave your face squeaky clean and bereft of grime.

Avoid the overload

Desist from piling on multiple serums. This creates an overload on the delicate pores of your skin and leaves them clogged and distraught. Choose a single application and use your ring finger to work in the under-eye serum.

Use cotton swabs

Choose good quality cotton facial pads to work off the dust and make-up from your face. Micellar water works best. Work in gentle, circular motions to remove the sweat traces and sunscreen. Use a mild face scrub only once a week.

Avoid rubbing the face too hard in your zeal.

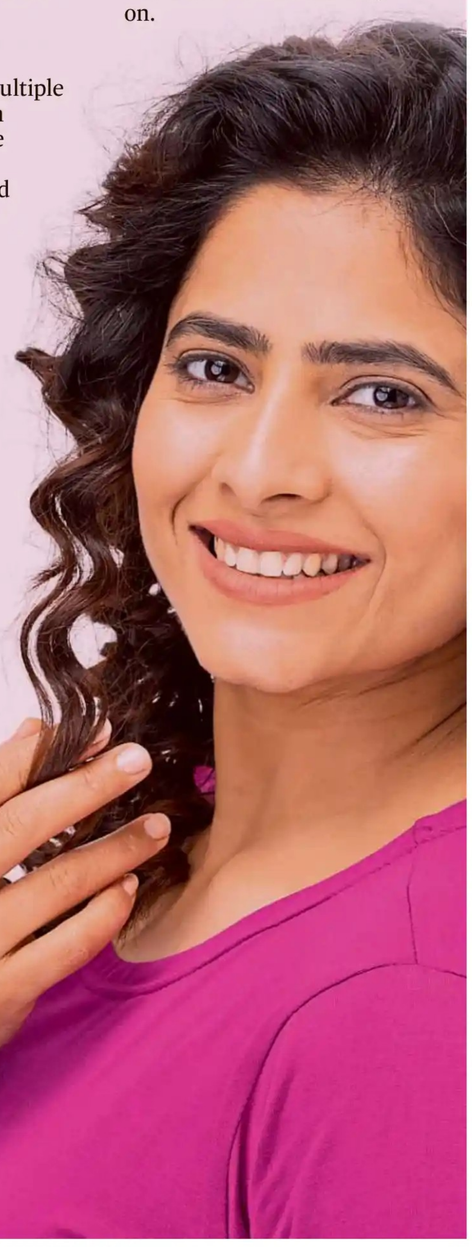
Dry out

Sometimes with the errant nip in the air, the skin feels taut and stretched. Moisturise well. Bring in the Vitamin C serum regularly and make use of gentle anti-oxidants and anti-pollutant sunscreens. Replenish the moisture level and hydrate well by drinking adequate water too.

Hygiene matters

Change your pillowcase every couple of days. Choose disposable cotton pads to clean your face as opposed to a microfibre face towel as, if the latter isn't clean, it turns into a house of bacteria, just like a moist cloth.

Splash your face with water often if you tend to sweat a lot. Make it a golden rule never to retire to bed with make-up on.



Are you getting the rest you need?

As the days get warmer, you need more rest after a punishing gym session. **Shilpi Madan** has some tips

Cool Down

While you are pulling ahead full steam with mean workouts and punishing exercise routines, take stock of cues to ensure recovery after you finish an intense session at the gym or at the court.

Agent hydrator

Tank up to make up for fluid loss. Summer heightens the sweat levels, and dehydration tends to set in, especially if you are flexing muscles in airconditioned confines. Drink water throughout the day. In case of intense sweating, make way for electrolytes, fresh coconut water and nimbu pani to replenish fluid loss.

Match up

Bring in a combination of protein and carbohydrates in your meal after your exercise session to focus on a nutritionally-sound diet. Include raw salads for added fibre and probiotics to bring in the adequate nutrition needed. It is unwise to rely merely on supplements for a healthy diet.

Stretches in

Cool off and wind down towards the last 10 minutes of your power yoga or Pilates session. Be firm and sure-footed instead of quick and dismissive of the cool off. Gentle mobility works as a great warm-up and a sound cool-off before and after your routine.

Stay active

On the days that you skip the gymnasium, play a sport, jog, walk or perform Surya namaskars without getting into the pump-iron mode. Activity enables your limbs and joints to move adequately and prevents creaks and aches on the work-out days.

Listen, listen

Pay attention to the signals that your body sends you. Instead of being a routine gym-rat, focus on your energy levels. If you have slept late, do not race to the gym on inadequate rest to tick mark the boxes on your to-do list. If you feel slightly unwell or weak, go easy.

Sleep well

Optimum rest is very important. When you sleep soundly, the muscles make time to repair and the hormones rebalance themselves. It is a good idea to work-out in the first half of the day, and budget eight hours of sleep every day.

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